India is studded with the holiest of the holy Buddhist shrines. But with the downfall of Buddhism in India, many of these sacred spots fell into disuse. They were destroyed and remained ignored and neglected. However, lately, these sacred spots have been restored and developed into religious cum tourist centres, regaining much of their lost glory.

In this multi-dimensional yet comprehensions study of the Buddhist Shrines in India the author presents the history of their development, discovery, decline, restoration and revival. In all, it covers 16 Buddhist Shrines, Caves, temples and Himalayan Shrines. He draws extensively on the writings of Chinese Pilgrim-Scholar Hiuen Tsang as also the findings of contemporary archaeologists,- the former gave an eye-witness account of that time when Buddhism was still a living force in India, and the latter tell us about the glory Buddhism in ruins.

The work provides maps and information regarding approach to the shrines from transportation point of view as also table showing distances from shrine to shrine so as to make this serious work useful for researchers and tourists.

D.C. Ahir (born 1928, Punjab) is a reputed Buddhist scholar and has made a very notable contribution to the Buddhist studies. He retired as Director to the Government of India in February 1986.

In appreciation of his noble and notable contribution as a Distinguished Scholar and Author, the Maha Bodhi Society of India, Sarnath Centre, conferred on him the Honorary Title of BAUDDHA SAHITYA SHIROMANI on 30th November 2001. Similarly, the Government of Sri Lanka, Ministry of Buddha Sasana, Colombo, conferred on him the honour of BUDDHA SASANA JYOTI on 19th January 2003. His bio-data also appears in the premier Edition of THE CONTEMPORARY WHO'S WHO 2003, for Significant Contribution to Society, published by American Biographical Institute, USA.

Buddhist World Press
425, Nimri Colony, Ashok Vihar
Phase-IV, Delhi-110052
Tel. 011-23259196, 23259648

ISBN 9789380852676

Rs.650

BUDDHIST SHRINES IN INDIA D.C. Ahir

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Buddhist World Press
Delhi-110 052

Published by:

Buddhist World Press
425, Nimri Colony, Ashok Vihar, Phase-IV
Delhi-110 052
E-Mail: brpc@vsnl.com

2017

1986 © D.C. Ahir

ISBN 9789380852676

Printed at Balaji Offset, Delhi

Publisher's note:

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Cataloging in Publication Data--DK
Courtesy: D.K. Agencies (P) Ltd. <docinfo@dkagencies.com>

Ahir, D. C., author.
Buddhist shrines in India / D.C. Ahir.
pages cm
Includes bibliographical references and index.
9789380852676

1. Buddhist shrines--India. 2. Buddhist antiquities--India.
I. Title.

BQ6330.A35 2017 DDC 294.34350954 23

Preface

The holiest of the holy shrines venerated by the Buddhists for over 2500 years are the four sacred spots, namely, Lumbini, Bodh Gaya, Sarnath and Kushinara—the scenes of Birth, Enlightenment, First Sermon and Mahaparinirvana of Gautama Buddha. The four other sacred shrines are: Sravasti, Sankasya, Rajagriha and Vaisali—the places sanctified by the Buddha and being the scenes of four principal miracles that the Blessed One is said to have performed. Together, these eight places are known as atthamahathanani in Pali or eight sacred spots.

Asoka the Great calls a visit to these eight shrines 'dharmayatra' or a pilgrimage of piety. Asoka built stupas, chaityas at these and at other places, which though not directly associated with the life and legend of the Buddha, rose into prominence with the spread of Buddhism in India. Asoka's example was emulated by the succeeding Buddhist Kings, Queens and other wealthy men and women. As a result, ancient India became studded with Buddhist monuments and shrines.

With the downfall of Buddhism in India, all the Buddhist shrines and monuments fell into disuse. They were either destroyed and plundered or just ignored and neglected, and in

course of time fell into dis-repair and ruins. The Buddhist shrines in Western India, being mostly in the shape of rock-cut-caves, were covered with natural growth and by and large escaped destruction.

These eight sacred Buddhist shrines have since been restored and developed as religious-cum-tourist centres. Most of them have regained much of their lost glory and are pulsating with life. They are once again looking bright and beautiful, busy and buoyant. Once again they are living shrines, worthy of worship and veneration to which thousands of devotees come every year from all over the world to pay their homage to the Great Buddha and earn merit by this pilgrimage of piety.

Besides these eight sacred shrines, there are eight more Buddhist shrines in modern India. These are: three Great Stupa sites: Sanchi, Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda, Nalanda, the site of the world famous Buddhist University; and four Buddhist Cave Temples—Ajanta, Ellora, Kandheri and Karla. These eight Buddhist shrines are also today the greatest attraction for the tourists and pilgrims alike. A visit to these repositories of glorious Buddhist heritage is doubtless a purifying experience.

In presenting this brief history of the development, decline, discovery, restoration and revival of the Buddhist shrines covered in this travel-guide, we have drawn heavily from the writings of the Chinese pilgrim-scholar, Hiuen Tsang and the findings of the archaeologists. The reason for this is obvious. Hiuen Tsang gives an eye-witness account of the glory of Buddhism in the seventh century A.D. when Buddhism was still a living force in India, and the modern archaeologists tell us about the glory of Buddhism in ruins. I am indebited to the pioneer scholars and archaeologists, the works of whom have been listed under 'Select Sources'. In particular, I am thankful to the Director General, Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi for his kind permission to make use of the material from the archaeological guides on seven Buddhist shrines as well as for permission to reproduce the photo-graphs.

The present day condition of all the shrines has been personally seen and verified by the author during his pilgrimage

to these sacred spots from April 1979 onward:

1.	Bodh Gaya, Rajgir-Nalanda Sarnath	2-9 April, 1979
2.	Sanchi, Ajanta, Ellora, Aurangabad	30-31 October, 1981 and 1-2 November, 1981
3.	Nagarjunakonda	21 July, 1982
4.	Kanheri Caves	18 September, 1982
5.	Kushinagar, Lumbini, Sravasti, Sarnath, Bodh Gaya	1-10 December, 1982
6.	Amaravati	26 December, 1982
7.	Karla-Bhaja Caves	19 March, 1983
8.	Vaisali	24 September, 1985
9.	Sankasya	25 January, 1986

For the facility of visitors, we have appended two maps, information regarding approach to the shrines from the nearest railway station/airport; and a table of distances from shrine to shrine. A list of all the Buddhist Caves in India has also been added for the benefit of those who may wish to visit these caves. Lastly, a brief account of the Buddhist monasteries, gompas in the high Himalaya has also been added in order to complete the story of Buddhist Shrines in modern India.

DIWAN CHAND AHIR

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1

Lumbini

A. SANCTITY

An unusual incident associated with the birth of Gautama Buddha is the wonderful dream which Queen Mahamaya had on the day she conceived. In her dream, she was carried by the guardian angels of the four quarters to the table-land of the Himalayas where she was received by heavenly queens, wives of the four world guardians. Then she was taken to lake Mansarovar (Anotota) where they bathed her, and robed her in divine dress, annointed her with perfumes and decked her with divine flowers. Thence she was taken to the sacred hill nearby on which there was a palace. Here she was laid upon a golden coach facing the east. As she laid her head upon the pillow, she beheld a divinely looking white elephant with six tusks. In its trunk the elephant carried a white lotus. The divine elephant touched her right side and seem to enter her womb.

When Mahamaya related this strange dream to King Suddhodana, he consulted astrologers, who predicted that the Queen would give birth to a son who would be either a universal monarch (Chakravartin) or a Buddha.

Realizing that the time for the birth of her child was coming nearer, Mahamaya sought the King's permission to go

to her parental home in Davadaha, as was the tradition on such occassions. Mahamaya, seated in a golden palanquin, left Kapilavastu, accompanied by her sister Prajapati, and a great retinue. On her way to Davadaha, Mahamaya had to pass through the Lumbini Grove, not far off from Kapilavastu, which was then at its best with numerous flowering trees and trees loaded with fruits. Enchanted by the pleasing sight around, the queen desired to rest for a while, and ordered the couriers to stop. Alighting from her palanquin, she walked up to the foot of a blooming Sal tree. Suddenly she felt the pangs of child-birth. She informed her lady attendants and they put round her a curtain and retired. While she was holding the branch of the Sal tree, the child was born.

While Mahamaya, attended by her sister Prajapati, washed in the nearby tank, the infant to the surprise of all stood up and took seven steps in the Northern direction. At each spot his foot touched, a lotus bloomed. And there was rejoicing in Heaven and the gods showered flower-petals on him. This sacred day was the Full Moon day in the month of Vaisakha in 623 B.C. or in 563 B.C.

Lumbini, the birth place of the World Honoured Buddha, is now in Nepal, just 10 kilometre from the Indo-Nepalese border, touching district Basti in Uttar Pradesh.

B. HISTORY

Asoka, the great Mauryan Emperor, (273 B.C.—232 B.C.) who sought solace in the Buddha-Dhamma, after witnessing the horrors of the Kalinga War, visited Lumbini in 250 B.C. and worshipped in person the sacred spot where the Buddha was born. The chronicles state:

> Arriving at Lumbini, Upagupta, the spiritual guide of Emperor Asoka, extended his right hand, and said to Asoka, 'Here, O Great King, the Tathagata was born.' Asoka, with overwhelming joy and deep devotion, prostrated before the Holy Tree, under which the Lord was born. He also caused to be built a stone wall around the holy tree and erected a pillar to commemorate his visit.

About 1000 years after the birth of the Buddha, Fa-hian, the first Chinese Buddhist pilgrim, visited Lumbini in A.D. 406 and saw the holy tree under which the Buddha was born. He also saw the bathing tank of the Sakyas where Queen Mahamaya had taken bath. Hiuen Tsang, the second Chinese Buddhist pilgrim, who visited Lumbini in A.D. 637 gives a graphic account of what he saw at the holy site. He says:

> "In this Grove was the beautiful bathing tank of the Sakyas, and about twenty-four paces from it was the old asoka tree at which the Buddha had been born in the world. South of these was a tope where Indra received the new-born infant. Next to it were four topes to the four Devarajas who had taken charge of the baby Buddha after his birth. Near these topes was a stone pillar set up by Asoka with the figure of a horse on the top. Afterwards the pillar had been broken in the middle, and laid on the ground (that is, half of it), by a thunderbolt from a malicious dragon."

There is evidence to show that Lumbini continued to attract pilgrims up to A. D. 12th century. Thereafter, it was completely engulfed by jungle and lay buried under dust and debris till the monolith pillar set up by Asoka at Lumbini, to commemorate his visit to this holy site, was discovered by Dr. Alois Anton Führer, a German archaeologist, in 1895.

Some other shrines discovered at Lumbini during subsequent excavations are:

1. The Maya Devi Temple.
2. The Sakyan (Siddharth) Tank.
3. A group of sixteen votive stupas.
4. A votine stupa showing two periods of construction.
5. A Vihara, 80 feet long and 60 feet wide to the south of the Maya Devi Temple.

C. OBJECTS OF INTEREST

1. Asoka Pillar

The pillar erected by Asoka at Lumbini, when discovered in 1896, "measured 22 feet 4 inches and the inscription

thereon was at a height of 9 feet 6 inches from the base. The diameter at the base was 8 feet 3 inches and around the inscribed portion 7 feet 5 inches". The Lumbini pillar (also known as the Rummindei pillar) stands to-day majestically proclaiming that here the Buddha was born. The royal inscription clearly says:

"(i) DEVANA-PIYENA PIYADASINA lajina-visativasa-bhisitena
(ii) atana-agacha mahiyite hida-BUDHE-jate SAKYAMUNI-ti
(iii) Sila vigadabhi-cha kalapita silathabhe-cha usapapite
(iv) hida-BHAGAVAM jate-ti LUMBINI GAME ubalike Kate
(v) athabhagiye-cha."

Translation

"Twenty years after his Coronation, King Priyadarsi, Beloved of the Gods, visited this spot in person and offered worship at this place, because the Buddha, the Sage of the Sakyas, was born here. He caused to be built a stone wall around the place and also erected this stone pillar to commemorate his visit. Because the Lord Buddha was born here, he made the village of Lumbini free from taxes and subject to pay only one-eighth of the produce as land revenue instead of the usual rate."

2. Mayadevi Temple

Besides the Asokan Pillar, a temple dedicated to the mother of the Buddha has also been excavated and restored. The historic Mayadevi temple, once again a living shrine, has a stone relic depicting the nativity of the Buddha. It shows queen Mahamaya holding onto a branch of the Sal tree and the newly born infant standing upright on lotus pedestal. It also shows Prajapati, sister of Mahamaya, and the maids. Another important remnant is the Sakyan bathing tank where Siddhartha was given his first purification bath.

3. Modern Viharas

Two modern Buddha Viharas have since come up at

Lumbini. The Theravada Buddhist Temple was first established by Ven. Chandramani Maha Thera of Kushinagar in 1956. The second modern Vihara is the recently established Tibetan Temple. These Viharas and the monks residing therein have sanctified the environments of Lumbini. Lumbini is also developing as an educational centre for the villagers around.

Kapilavastu

Unlike Lumbini which stands identified, the identification of the legendary Kapilavastu, where the Buddha spent 29 years of his early life before leaving his hearth and home in quest of enlightenment, has been a matter of controversy for over hundred years. Tilaura Kot in Nepal and Piprahwa in India have been the main claimants for the site of ancient Kapilavastu.

According to some scholars Tilaura Kot (30 Km. West of Lumbini) in Nepal was the site of old Kapilavastu and Piprahwa (15 Km. from Lumbini) in India was the site of new Kapilavastu established after the destruction of the old one by Vidudabha.

As compared to Tilaura Kot, Piprahwa in district Basti, U.P. has yielded many interesting and important Buddhist relics, seals and inscriptions from the ruins of stupa and monastery there. During the excavations at Piprahwa in 1897-1898, W.C. Peppe and P.C. Mukherji, discovered in the main stupa and at a depth of about eighteen feet below the summit, a huge stone coffer. In addition to other valuable objects, the coffer contained five caskets, four of soapstone and one of crystal. The lid of the smaller soapstone casket contained an inscription which was read as "Sukiti-bhatinam Sabhaganakinan sa-puta-dalanam iyam salila-nidhane Budhasa bhagavate Sakiyanam". The inscription has been translated as follows:

"This relic shrine of divine Buddha (is the donation) of the Sakya Sukiti-brothers associated with their sisters, sons and wives."

In January 1971, K.M. Srivastava of the Archaeological Survey of India, started fresh excavations at Piprahwa. Picking up the thread where Peppe had left in 1897-1898, he

went downward. Fresh excavations showed that the stupa, which had earlier yielded relic caskets, enclosed a mud stupa, enclosed by a single course of baked bricks. When this mud stupa was carefully probed, it yielded in 1972 two soapstone relic caskets. The excavation in the Eastern Monastery at Piprahwa yielded more than 20 terracotta sealings with inscriptional evidence in Brahmi script of A.D. 1st—A.D. 2nd century.

The location of the legendary Kapilavastu was confirmed in 1974 following the discovery of the lid of a pot, carrying inscriptional evidence, at Piprahwa in Basti district of Uttar Pradesh, by Mr. K.M. Srivastava. According to him, the sealings and the lid of the pot had established 'beyond doubt that Piprahwa is the ancient site of Kapilavastu.' The legend on the lid of the pot: "Devaputra Vihara Kapilavastu Bhikshu Sanghasa" excavated from the site was similar to the one on some sealings discovered from the same place in 1973. Apparently, Piprahwa is the site of ancient Kapilavastu, the capital of the Sakyas, and the scene of Buddha's early life.

The sacred relics of the Buddha discovered from Kapilavastu (Piprahwa) are now preserved in the National Museum, New Delhi.

Future Development

The Lumbini Development Committee set up by the Government of Nepal in co-operation with the United Nations Development Programme and Buddhist Countries, including India, has drawn up ambitious plans for the development of Lumbini. According to the Master Plan, the development envisages three elements: (a) The Sacred Garden (b) The Monastic Zone (c) The New Lumbini Village.

The Sacred Garden will comprise of a sacred area, a tank area and a forest area, about 300 metres—400 metres around the Asokan Pillar. The Monastic Zone will have shrines, monasteries and places of worship with different shapes and colours out of the contribution of different nations, institutions and organisations. The New Lumbini Village is planned as community centre providing shelter for pilgrims and tourists.

2

Bodh Gaya

A. SANCTITY

When Siddharatha renounced the wordly pleasures and left his palace-home to seek the truth, he had no set plans. After leaving Kapilavastu, the Prince turned mendicant trekked on foot a distance of about 400 miles and reached Rajagriha (Rajagaha) which was then renowned as the abode of great philosophers and leaders of thought. There he spent some time at the ashram of Alara Kalama. Not satisfied, he went further to the ashram of Uddaka Ramaputta and trained himself in the ways of meditation as taught by that great teacher. But peace still eluded him. To find a solution to his mental unrest, therefore, the Bodhisatta marched forward towards the forest of Uruvela (Uruvilva) Vana, some 40 miles away. The five parivrajakas whom he had met at Rajagriha also joined him there. Together, they started practising ascetism. For six years, the Bodhisatta practised rigid austerities and self mortification. Still he could not attain what he sought. Convinced of the futility of mortification of the flesh, the Bodhisatta abandoned the path of fasting, and accepted a bowl of rice pudding offered by Sujata, daughter of the Chief of the neighbouring village Senani. Annoyed with Siddharatha on partaking of food, his five companions

deserted him. Thus, the Buddha-to-be was left alone to pursue his path.

Having refreshed himself with food, the Bodhisatta reflected on his past experiences which had failed. Determined to achieve enlightenment to know the ultimate truth, he crossed the river and came to the Bo-tree on the western bank of river Neranjara, modern Nilajan or Lilajan, 10 Km. south of the present day city of Gaya in Bihar. There he sat cross-legged, determined not to leave that place until he had attained the supreme and absolute wisdom. On the fateful night when Gautama was about to attain the Buddhahood, the Mara, the celebrated Lord of evil thoughts and evil passions, swung into action and attempted in various ways to thwart his efforts. But all the efforts of Mara failed, and he disappeared discomforted. Then, as says Ashvaghosha: "The Blessed One during the first watch of that wonderful (Vaisakha Purnima) night acquired the knowledge of his previous existence, in the second watch acquired the divine eye, in the last watch fathomed the law of Dependent Origination and at sunrise attained Omniscience."

B. HISTORY

Of all the places sanctified by their association with Gautama Buddha, Bodh Gaya or Buddha Gaya shines the brightest. Being the scene of Buddha's penance and supreme enlightenment, the history and traditions of this sacred spot go back to the earliest days.

Beginning with the visit of Asoka the Great in 259 B.C., the streams of pilgrims flowed towards it without intermission for more than 1500 years. Not only that, "Princes from all parts of India", as says Rajendralal Mitra, "vied with one another in enriching it with the highest treasures that they could command. Every spot where the saint had rested or taken his meal; every pool in which he had laved his person or washed his scanty raiments, every nook and corner connected in some way or the other with his long protracted meditations and self-torture, once had a recording stone, and nothing was left undone to produce an uninterrupted page of monumental history."

The first temple to be built at this sacred spot was by

Asoka. A portrayal of the Asokan temple and other buildings built at Buddha Gaya around 250 B.C. has been found in a Bas-relief discovered at the Bharhut Stupa in Madhya Pradesh. The Bas-relief shows the Bodhi Tree with the Vajrasana in front adorned with umbrellas and garlands and sheltered by a pillared hall. It also shows a railing around the Bodhi Tree, with a gateway on the east.

The present magnificent Maha Bodhi Temple appears to have been built in A.D. 2nd century. As it was built over the remains of the Asoka's temple, the Vajrasana Throne retains its original position of Buddha's seat of Enlightenment. The age of the present Temple is testified by the presence of a gold coin of King Huvishka amongst the Relics deposited in front of the Throne, along with some punch-marked coins.

According to Cunningham, who made this fascinating discovery in 1871, he found three distinct layers in the flooring of its main chamber on the ground floor, the upper layer being represented by a granite pavement, the middle layer by a pavement of sandstone, and the lower layer by a plaster floor. Inside this chamber, he found a basalt throne of which the blue stone facing stood on the granite pavement. Removing this pavement he discovered a second throne behind the first with four plasters in front. Removing this plaster facing of the second throne he discovered a ball of stiff earth or clay, which on being broken yielded inter-alia the following relics:

GOLD—2	impressions in thin gold of the obverse face of a gold coin of Huvishka, jointed together, and held by a ring.
	1 crescent of thin gold, 0.6 inch broad
SILVER—5	punch-marked coins, one with human figures, besides many small shapeless fragments.
GEMS—145	Pearls, small, all black with age.

Removing the whole of plaster from the sandstone front, he made a startling discovery of a third throne of polished sandstone behind the second with four plasters in front precisely as it is shown in the Bharhut carving representing a scene of Buddha Sakyamuni's enlightenment (Bhagavato

Sakamunino bodho). The Indo-Scythian and Gupta inscriptions also record the construction of the Great Temple in the reign of Huvishka, the second Kushana ruler after Kanishka. The colossal (gilded) image of the Buddha touching the earth inside the sanctum of the Maha Bodhi Temple was added in about A.D. 380. This remarkable image of the Buddha symbolizes the supreme event of Enlightenment.

According to the inscriptions discovered at Bodh Gaya, a big monastery (Sangharama) with three lofty towers and surrounded by a 30 feet-40 feet high wall was constructed by King Megha Varna (Siri Meghavanna) of Sri Lanka in A.D. 388. Some additions to the Maha Bodhi Temple were made by the Burmese in around A.D. 450. In about A.D. 600, the Bo-Tree was cut down and burnt by Sasanka, a Brahmin King of Bengal, who was a great opponent of Buddhism. Twenty years later, in A.D. 620, a devout local Buddhist King, Raja Purna Varma, restored the Bodhi Tree and surrounded it by a wall, 24 ft. high, to prevent it from being cut down again.

When the sacred shrine at Bodh Gaya came to be called as "Mahabodhi" is not certain. In his inscription, Asoka calls it Sambodhi. Fa-hian, who saw it in A.D. 409 did not mention the name. However, Hiuen-T-Sang, who visited it two centuries later, calls it the 'Mahabodhi Vihara'. Thereafter, this name is mentioned in a number of inscriptions found at Bodh Gaya, the last one being mentioned in late 14th century.

Fa-hian, the first Chinese pilgrim, says that pagodas have been raised at all the places where Buddha had suffered self-mortification and had spent seven weeks after enlightenment. He further says:

> "Where Buddha attained to Buddhaship, there are three monasteries, each with resident priests, who receive offerings in abundance from the populace, without the least stint. The strictness with which, while Buddha was still in the world, the holy brotherhood observed their vows and disciplinary regulations, and the gravity of their deportment when sitting, rising, or entering an assembly, persist down to the present day."

Hiuen-T-Sang, the second Chinese pilgrim, saw in A.D. 637

the present Maha Bodhi Temple with a third and final enlargement of its court. In the vicinity of it, he saw twenty-one stupas. He also saw three tanks (Buddha, Sakra and Muchilinda) and six monasteries including the Ceylonese monastery which had more than a thousand resident monks. Hiuen-T-Sang says:

"Going South-West from Mount Pragbodhi about 14 li or 15 li, we come to the Bodhi tree. It is surrounded by a brick wall (a wall of piled bricks) of considerable height, steep and strong. It is long from East to West and short from North to South. It is about 500 paces round. Rare trees with their renowned flowers connect their shade and cast their shadows; the delicate Sha herb and different shrubs carpet the soil. The principal gate opens to the East, opposite to the Nairanjana river. The southern gate adjoins a great flowery bank. The western side is blocked up and difficult of access (steep and strong). The northern gate opens into the great Sangharsama. Within the surrounding wall, the sacred traces touch one another in all directions. Here there are Stupas, in another place Viharas."

"In the middle of the enclosure surrounding the Bodhi tree is the diamond throne (Vajrasana). It is the place where the Buddhas attain the holy path (the sacred way of Buddhahood). It is also called the Bodhimanda."

"The Bodhi tree above the diamond throne is the same as the Pippala tree. In old days, when Buddha was alive, it was several hundred feet high. Although it has often been injured by cutting, it is still 40 feet or 50 feet in height. Buddha sitting under this tree reached perfect wisdom, and, therefore, it is called the (Samyak Sambodhi) Tree of Knowledge. The bark is of a yellowish-white colour, the leaves, and twigs of a dark green."

"To the East of the Bodhi tree, there is a vihara about 160 feet or 170 feet high. Its lower foundation-wall is 20 paces or more in its face. The building (pile) is of blue tiles (bricks) covered with Chunam (burnt stone lime); all the niches in the different stories hold golden figures. The four sides of the building are covered with wonderful ornamental work; in one place figures of stringed pearls (garlands), in another figures of heavenly Rishis. The whole is surrounded by a gilded copper

Amalaka fruit. The eastern face adjoins a storeyed pavillion, the projecting caves of which rise one over the other to the height of three distinct chambers; its projecting caves, its pillars, beams, doors and windows are decorated with gold and silver ornamental work, with pearls and gems let in to fill up interstices. Its sombre chambers and mysterious halls have doors in each of the three storeys. To the right and left of the outside gate are niches like chambers; in the left is a figure of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, and in the right a figure of Maitreya (T'se-shi) Bodhisattva. They are made of white silver, and are about 10 feet high."

Describing the monastery built by King Meghavarna of Sri Lanka, Hiuen-T-Sang says:

"Outside the northern gate of the wall of the Bodhi tree is the Mahabodhi Sangharama. It was built by a former king of Simhala (Ceylon). This edifice has six halls, with towers of observation (temple towers) of three storeys. The priests of this convent are more than 1000 men; they study the great vehicle and belong to the Sthavira (Shang-tso-put) School. They carefully observe the Dharma Vinaya, and their conduct is pure and correct."

Nearly for three centuries after the visit of Hiuen-T-Sang, no major repairs, no improvements appear to have been carried out at Buddha Gaya. It was only in A.D. 1010 that some minor repairs are reported to have been undertaken by Mahipala of the well known Pala Dynasty of Bengal. The first major restoration and renovation of the Maha Bodhi Temple was carried out by the Burmese in around A.D. 1070. The last Indian Buddhist King to carry out repairs to the historic Maha Bodhi Temple was Raja Asoka-balla of Sapadalaksa (Siwalik hills) in the Punjab. His inscriptions indicate that in consequence of the decay of the 'Sasana or Law of Buddha' an appeal was made to the illustrious Asoka-balla, King of Sapadalaksa for assistance. With his aid, and that of a local chief named Purusottama Simha, a Gandhakuti or the Temple of Buddha, was built, and several works of repair were carried out under the superintendence of a Buddhist monk called Dharmaraksita. Another inscription dated to the year 51 of the era of Lakshamanasena of Bengal, or in A.C. 1106+51=1157 of the King Asoka-balla and found at Buddha

Gaya says: "Adoration to Buddha. 'The Great Sramana. He it is who tells what the root is from which virtue springs, as also what it is that chokes that virtue. This is the virtuous gift of the great King, the illustrious Asoka-balla-Deva, an adherent of the excellent Mahayana School, a great Upasaka, pious at heart. May whatever be its merit, be for the advancement in spiritual knowledge, first of my father and mother, and after them of all beings."

By the time of Asoka-balla, it seems, the responsibility for looking after the Puja ceremonies at this sacred shrine had been taken over by the venerable monks from Sri Lanka. In the same inscription Asoka-balla further says: "Moreover for the offering to Buddha, the daily ration with pots, incense and lamps, shall be given so long as the Sun and Moon shall endure by the leaders of Ceylon Assembly in Mahabodhi."

Dharmasvamin, a Tibetan pilgrim, visited Buddha Gaya in A.D. 1234. He found the place practically deserted. He records: "Only four monks were found staying (in the Vihara). One (of them) said, 'It is not good. All have fled from fear of the Turushka soldiery.' They blocked up the door in front of the Mahabodhi image with bricks and plastered it. Near it they placed another image as a substitute."

When Buddhism declined in India, the Burmese again came to the rescue of the decaying Maha Bodhi Temple. They undertook repairs to the Great Temple at least thrice during the 14th and 15th centuries; the last repairs being between 1472-1492. Thereafter, Buddha Gaya was forgotten by the Buddhists, and the Temple became more and more ruinous. Taking advantage of the situation, a Hindu Mahant, Gosain Giri established his Math at Buddha Gaya in A.D. 1590. With the coming of the Mahant, the holy Buddhist shrine passed into the hands of non-Buddhists and the phase of its sacrilege began.

When Dr. Buchanan Hamilton, a renowned archaeologist, visited Buddha Gaya in 1811, he found the Mahabodhi Temple in utter ruins. Dr. Buchanan records worship being offered to the Bodhi Tree by the Hindus, but adds that "some zealous persons had lately built a stairway on the side of the terrace so that orthodox may pass without entering the porch and thus seeing the hateful image of the Buddha."

Fifty years later, in 1861, Cunningham found the Mahant and his followers indulging in all sorts of un-Buddhistic ceremonies in the main shrine. Further, though the Mahant claimed the Maha Bodhi and the land around it as his own property, yet he took no steps to repair the decaying historic Temple.

In 1875, King Mindan Min of Burma, sought and obtained the permission of the Government of India, and the Mahant, to repair the decaying Maha Bodhi Temple. As the repairs initiated by the Burmese were not proceeding on right lines, the Government of India appointed in 1880, J. D. Beglar to make thorough repairs of the building. General Cunningham and Dr. Rajendra Lal Mitra were also deputed to supervise the repairs. The restoration was done on the basis of a small model in stone found among the ruins from which the whole design of the building as it existed in medieval times could be traced with tolerable completeness. The restoration and renovation of the Maha Bodhi Temple to its present condition, almost an exact replica of the original shrine, was a lengthy affair and cost a great deal of money but was accomplished with rare devotion and dedication by Cunningham, R. L. Mitra and Beglar.

Even after restoration, the property rights of the Maha Bodhi Temple and its lands continued to be vested on the Mahant. How callous and careless his attitude towards the proper protection, nay, even towards the sanctity of the shrine, was, is evident from what was seen by Sir Edwin Arnold, the world famous author of the 'Light of Asia', who visited Buddha Gaya in 1885. Writing in the Daily Telegraph, London, of which he was the editor, Edwin Arnold pathetically observed:

"The Buddhist world had, indeed, well-nigh forgotten this hallowed and most interesting centre of their faith—the Mecca, the Jerusalem, of a million Oriental congregations when I sojourned in Buddha-Gaya a few years ago. I was grieved to see Maharatta peasants performing "Sharaddh" in such a place, and thousands of precious ancient relics of carved stone inscribed with Sanskrit lying in piles around."

The movement of regaining the control of the holy Maha Bodhi shrine began in January 1891 when Anagarika Dharmapala visited Bodh Gaya. Visibly moved by the neglect

of the Seat of Buddha's Enlightenment, he resolved then and there to take steps to stop further desecration of the holy shrine. As a first step, the far sighted Dharmapala founded the Buddha Gaya Maha Bodhi Society on 31 May 1891. Then he persuaded four Buddhist monks from Ceylon to come and stay at Buddha Gaya. Venerables Dunuarla Chandajoti, Matale Sumangala, Anuradhapura Pemmananda and Galle Sudassana reached Bodh Gaya in July 1891 and took up their residence in the Burmese Rest House, constructed a few years earlier. As the Mahant had ownership rights on the entire property at Bodh Gaya, he objected to the presence of the Bhikkhus. And in February 1893, two of the monks were severely beaten up by his men. Two years later in 1895, when Dharmapala attempted to install an image of the Buddha, presented to him by the people of Japan on the upper floor of the Temple, he was assaulted and prevented by Mahant's men to do so. The Buddha image was later kept in the Burmese Rest House. The Mahant and some Hindu organisations, particularly the British India Association, London, later tried to get the Buddha image removed even from the Rest House on the plea that it "was offensive to the Hindus". But the Government did not yield.

In 1906, the Mahant filed a suit seeking ejection of the Buddhist monks from the Rest House. The Buddhists also filed a civil suit claiming control of the Maha Bodhi Temple. The legal war of nerves continued till, after independence, the Government of Bihar enacted the Buddha Gaya Temple Management Act in 1949 in accordance with a management committee which was constituted by the State Government in 1952 and entrusted with the management and control of the Temple land, and other property. As provided in the Buddha Gaya Management Act of 1949, the Committee consists of eight members, four Hindus and four Buddhists, with the Collector of Gaya as Chairman. To ensure that the Hindus have always the upper hand in the Committee, a specific provision has been made in the Act. Section 3(3) of the Act says: "District Magistrate shall be the ex-officio Chairman provided that the State Government shall nominate a Hindu as Chairman of the Committee (for the Period District Magistrate of Gaya is non-Hindu)."

In 1956, the 2500th Buddha Jayanti Year, which was celebrated with enthusiasm by the Buddhist World, a concerted effort was made by the Government of India to restore and renovate the sacred Buddhist shrines in India. At Bodh Gaya, the long needed repairs to the Maha Bodhi Temple and its precincts were carried out. Some more areas around the Temple were acquired; some ugly huts were removed and the surroundings were cleaned and dressed up. A perambulating path (pradakshina patha) round the Temple was also opened up. A small site museum to house the ancient sculptures lying scattered near the Temple complex was constructed. In addition, amenities like electricity, water and accommodation for visitors were also provided. In the recent years, the environments of the sacred Maha Bodhi Temple have been further improved by the Temple Management Committee. For instance, provision of entrance from the Eastern side, with adequate parking space, a paved pradakshina path, and the compound wall have added serenity to the Great Temple. The pilgrims can now pay their homage to the Great Buddha in calm and quite environment.

C. OBJECTS OF INTEREST

1. Maha Bodhi Temple

The Maha Bodhi Temple, as it now stands, is approximately 170 feet high, while its base is 50 feet square. It consists of a straight pyramidal tower surmounted by a stupa. Its entrance porch, comparatively later than the original Temple, is on the east. Each of the four sides of the tower presents several tiers of niches, while the front face has a tall lancet opening for the admission of light into the sanctum and at the base of the tower there rises a turret at each of the four corners—a miniature replica of the main spire. The Temple is built of bluish bricks, with a coating of plaster. In front of the main entrance, there is an imposing gateway decorated with delicate carvings. The Gateway presents on the front an elegant stone votice stupa of small proportions. The niches on both sides of the main entrance to the Temple contain images of the Buddha. The central shrine room of the Temple, which is situated at the ground floor is reached after passing through a vaulted passage. The

pillars and the main door are made of stone.

The great gilded image of the Buddha, in the earth touching attitude symbolising the supreme event of Enlightenment, is enshrined in the main sanctum at the base.

The Upper storey of the Temple has two steep stone staircases on either side of the outer hall near the entrance. On the first floor one can walk right round the main tower as there is a wide and open promenade. At the four corners of this floor, there are four smaller towers which add much to the symmetry and grandeur of the whole structure. The two towers on the West side have small shrines containing images of the Bodhisattvas, while the other two shrines in the East contain the landings of the staircases. On the two landings, there are two large images of the Buddha. The parapet along the passage contains numerous votive stupas, some of which are exquisitely carved and those in the East are the best. Under the main tower on the first floor is a fairly large shrine with a Bodhisattva image installed on the altar.

The outer side of the Mahabodhi Temple has innumerable niches, carvings, creepers and images. The main niche on the West wall contains an unusually fine image of the Buddha which has been gilded by the Tibetans. The best view of the Temple may be had from the North.

2. Bodhi Tree

The sacred Bodhi Tree sitting under which Siddhartha had attained Supreme Enlightenment is situated to the West of the Temple. Asoka's visit to the Bodhi Tree is known from his inscriptions ,and is also portrayed on one of the Sanchi gateways. Sasanka, a Hindu King, had cut down the Bodhi Tree in A.D. 6th century but luckily another tree arose out of the same root. This tree was seen by Hiuen Tsang in A.D. 637. In the course of excavation work in 1870 the old Bodhi Tree fell down and a sapling from it was planted by Cunningham in its original place. This is the Bodhi Tree which we see today.

3. Vajrasana

The Vajrasana (Diamond Throne) seen between the Bodhi

Tree and the Temple marks the actual spot sitting where Siddhartha attained supreme enlightenment. The holy seat is now marked by a red sandstone slab, which is 7 feet 6 inches long and 4 feet 3 inches broad and 3 feet high. The Vajrasana was unearthed during repairs in A.D. 1881.

4. Seven Sacred Spots

After Enlightenment, the Buddha is said to have bathed in the Sakra tank. The two tanks which now exist, one in the Pipal Pati hamlet, south of Buddha Pokhara and the other in the Tikahigha hamlet, east of the former, seem to be the tanks, Sakra and Muchilinda respectively.

After taking bath in the Sakra tank, the Buddha sat cross-legged at the foot of the Bodhi tree gazing at it for seven days, enjoying the bliss of Nirvana. He spent the second week in walking to and fro near the Bodhi Tree. The site of Buddha's Promenade (Cankamana) also known as "shrine of the Jewel walk", is along the northern side of the Temple. The foot-steps of the Buddha are represented by lotus flowers on a narrow masonry platform about 53 feet long, 3 feet 6 inches broad and a little more than 3 feet high.

The Animesalocana Stupa within the courtyard of the Temple marks the site where Lord Buddha stood, during the third week, gazing at the Bodhi Tree out of gratitude for giving Him shelter. The Ratanaghara or the Jewel-Chamber, a small roofless shrine in which Lord Buddha spent the fourth week in meditation is also within the courtyard to the north of the Cankamana.

The Buddha spent the fifth week under the Ajapala Nigrodha tree where Sujata had offered him a meal of rice-pudding. The actual site of this tree has not been identified yet, but a place within the premises of a Hindu temple in the village of Bakraur on the eastern bank of the Nerajara river is pointed out as the site where this tree stood. The site of Sujata Kutir is nearby.

The Buddha spent the sixth week near the Muchlinda lake where Muchilinda, the Naga King of the lake, is said to have sheltered the Buddha from rain. Mocharin, a village about a mile south of the Maha Bodhi Temple apparently derives its name from Muchilinda.

The Buddha spent the seventh week at the foot of the Rajyatana tree where He made His first converts, Tapussa and Balluka, two merchants from Utkala, modern Orissa. From the Rajyatana tree, the site of which has not been identified yet, the Buddha returned to the Bodhi Tree and, after some-time, thoughtfully proceeded to the deer park at Sarnath (Isipatana) to impart the Bodhi to his former ascetic colleagues who had left him.

5. Other objects

The other objects of interest at Bodh Gaya are: (1) the stone railing round the Temple of which only some portions remain intact; (ii) the votive stupas round the Temple in the courtyard; (iii) the so called Pânca Pandava Temple which is a white building to the left side of the entrance to the Great Temple with five images of the Bodhisattvas; (iv) the foundation of a Buddhist monastery to the South-West of the Temple; (v) a large tank to the South of the Temple; (vi) the Asokan pillar at the entrance to the tank; and (vii) the Neranjara river, which was crossed by Siddhartha on his way to the Bodhi Tree, is to the East of the Temple.

Prior to enlightenment, Buddha was staying on the other side of the river Neranjara in the area now covered by the village of Bakraur. In that village are, therefore, the Ajapala tree, the scene of Sujata's offering, and the traditional site of Sujata's hut. Another historic site in Bakraur, which still retains some of its ancient attributes of a sylvan retreat, is the Pragbodhi (i.e., before Bodhi) hill where, after the departure of his five companions and before moving on for meditation under the bodhi tree, the Buddha is said to have meditated in a cave (now known as Dungeswari) for some time. The Pragbodhi hill is now known as Dhongra hill which, rising about a mile north-east of Bakraur, runs on towards Rajagriha. The Buddha Gaya shrines have also a number of interesting and historical bas-reliefs and carvings on the old Diamond-Throne, some of the pillars of Jewel-walk shrine, the old Sandstone Railing and the latter granite additions to the Railing. Majority of these bas-reliefs and carvings may be dated to Ist century B.C. and they cover both religious and secular topics. The religious subjects treated are:

1. The birth of the Buddha at Lumbini.
2. Four slightly different representations of Buddha's Enlightenment at Bodh Gaya.
3. Six slightly different representations of Buddha's First Sermon at Sarnath.
4. Eight different representations of the Mahaparinirvana of the Buddha at Kushinagar.
5. The following four incidents of the Buddha's present life are also depicted:
   (a) Purchase of Jetavana by Anathapindika of Sravasti for dedication to the Buddha.
   (b) the visit of the heavenly ministrel Panchasikha deputed by Sakra to make an appointment with Buddha (Sakkapanha-Sutta, Digha—Nikaya).
   (c) the homage to Buddha by the Naga-King Elapatra.
   (d) the Buddha and a ploughman (of Sravasti).
6. 18 Jatakas (stories of the past lives of the Buddha are also depicted.
7. The Secular reliefs discovered at Bodh Gaya are of astronomical representation of:
   1. The Sun (Surya), 2. Twelve signs of the Solar Zodiac (Rasi-Chakra) and 3. The Lunar Asterisms (Nakshataras).

6. Modern Temples

To-day, the Great Maha Bodhi Temple is once again a living shrine and is visited by millions of Pilgrims every year from all over the world. The prestige of this surviving symbol of ancient grandeur and glory has been enhanced by a number of modern temples and monasteries built at Bodh Gaya by the Buddhists of other countries. Of them, the important ones are:

1. Tibetan Temple

The Tibetan Temple is to the east of the Maha Bodhi Rest House. Built in typical Tibetan style, its main shrine on the first floor is stocked with many colourful images, scriptures, tonkas and other religious objects. There is also a huge Prayer wheel.

2. Chinese Temple

The Chinese Temple, built on the pattern of a Buddhist temple in China, is situated further to the south-west of the Maha Bodhi Rest House.

3. Thai Temple

The Wat Thai (Thai Buddhist Temple) is to the west of the Archaeological Museum. It was first built in 1957 and later partially reconstructed in 1970-1972 by the Royal Government of Thailand. Built in typical Thai style and almost a copy of the Marble temple in Bangkok, this temple is quite impressive and is an attractive building. The huge golden Buddha image in the Main shrine is its primary attraction for the visitors.

4. Japanese Temple

The beautiful Japanese Temple is situated at a little distance on the right of the Thai Temple. Built by the International Brotherhood Association of Japan, it was inaugurated on 8 December 1973.

5. New Japanese Temple

Just adjacent to the first Japanese Temple, another beautiful Buddhist Temple has been built by the Daijokoyo Association of Japan. It was inaugurated on 13 February 1983. The lofty Pagoda has enhanced the beauty of this temple.

6. Burmese Monastery

The Buddhists of Burma have also built a monastery in their national style at Bodh Gaya.

3

Sarnath

A. SANCTITY

Having enjoyed the bliss of Enlightenment for seven weeks, the Buddha got up, gazed with reverence at the sacred Bo-Tree and thoughtfully proceeded on foot to the deer park (Mrigadava) about 250 kms. away at Isipatana (Rishipatana), modern Sarnath, near Varanasi. According to Mahavastu, a Sanskrit Buddhist text, it was here that Pratyeka of 500 Buddhas or Rishis fell after his attainment of Nirvana, hence. the name Rishipatana. A Jataka story says that Mrigadava was the place where herds of deer roamed freely as they had been granted immunity by the King of Varanasi, moved to compassion by the spirit of self-sacrifice of Bodhisattva born as Nyagrodhamriga. The modern name seems to have been derived from Saranganatha (Lord of deer), a name borne by the Mahadeva enshrined in a temple nearby.

On seeing Gautama coming towards them, the five ascetics decided not to welcome him saying that 'by abandoning austerities and turning to a life of luxury, Gautama has committed a sin and is not worthy of respect'.

But when the Buddha came near, all the five Parivrajakas involuntarily rose from their seats and greeted him. Impressed by his dignified manners and his personality, they treated him

like a distinguished guest.

Unfolding the new path discovered by him, the Buddha said, "Two extremes there are, O monks, which he who strives after enlightenment must avoid, which two? A life addicted to pleasure which is vulgar and worthless, and a life given to self-mortification which is painful and equally profitless."

Then the Buddha enunciated the Four Noble Truths: Suffering; its cause; its cessation; and the path leading to the cessation of suffering. And added that the way to Nibbana, emancipation, or the path that leads to cessation of suffering, higher wisdom and peace of mind is the Noble Eightfold path or the Middle path. This path is:

1. Right Understanding: free from superstition and delusion;
2. Right Thought: high and worthy of the intelligent, earnest man.
3. Right Speech: kindly, open, truthful.
4. Right Conduct: peaceful, honest, pure.
5. Right Livelihood: bringing hurt or danger to no living thing.
6. Right Effort: in self-training and in self-control.
7. Right Mindfulness: the active, watchfulmind.
8. Right Concentration: earnest thought on the deep mysteries of life.

The Buddha thus preached His First Sermon at Isipatana, modern Sarnath. This event is known in the Buddhist text as the Dharmachakra-pravartana, "Turning of the Wheel of the Law". At Sarnath again the Buddha laid the foundation of the Sangha or the order of Monks. The five Parivrajakas, namely, Anjata Kaudinya, Bhaddiya, Vappa, Mahanama and Assaji, popularly known in the Buddhist Texts as Panchvargiya Bhikkhus, were the first members of the Sangha established by the Buddha. The sixth person to join the Sangha was Yasa, the son of a rich merchant of Varanasi. Following his example, fifty four friends and companions of Yasa also became disciples of the Buddha saying, "What is good for Yasa, must be good for them."

Two months after the First Sermon, the Buddha summoned

His first sixty disciples and said, "Go ye O Bhikkhus and wander forth for the gain of the many, for the welfare of the many, in compassion for the world. Let not two of you go the same way. Proclaim, O Bhikkhus, the Doctrine glorious, preach ye a life of holiness, perfect and pure." Thus began from Sarnath the missionary life of the Buddha and Buddhism.

B. HISTORY

Sarnath, being the scene of Dharma-chakra-pravartana and founding of the Sangha, a number of temples and monasteries had been constructed at this holy spot during the life time of the Buddha. No traces of these buildings have, however, survived. Nor the names of the pious donors are known.

Asoka, the first Buddhist Emperor, came on pilgrimage to Sarnath in about 250 B.C. and raised several monuments at this holy place. One of them was the Dharmarajika Stupa. Another monument was the Dhamek Stupa. Yet another important monument was the monolith pillar surmounted by a magnificent lion capital. This lion-capital has been adopted by modern India as her National Emblem. The lion-capital was crowned by a grand Dharmachakra symbolizing the Supreme Wheel of the Doctrine which the Buddha had set in motion at Sarnath. The Dharmachakra (Wheel of the Law) now forms the central part of India's National Flag.

With the advent of Kanishka who ascended the Kushana throne in A.D. 78, Buddhism in India entered a new phase of religious and artistic activity. Sarnath also had its due share, and a number of new temples and viharas were added. A novel addition at Sarnath was a colossal Bodhisattva image of red sandstone together with a proportionately large parasol (Chhatra) crowing it. This image was installed in the third year of Kanishka's reign by Bhikshu Bala of Mathura.

During the Gupta rule (4th century-6th century) the main shrine of Sarnath was enlarged and the Dhamek Stupa was encased with carved stones. The famous seated Buddha image in the attitude of preaching. was also added during this period. An inscription on the pedestal of a Buddha image mentions the gift of Kumaragupta, possibly a reference to the Gupta

Emperor of that name who ruled from A.D. 414-A.D. 455. Two other inscriptions discovered at Sarnath are those of Kumara Gupta II, dated A.D. 473 and Buddhagupta, dated A.D. 476. It may not be out of place to mention here that atleast two of the later Gupta Kings were devout Buddhists. They were Buddhagupta and Narasimhagupta or Baladitya who ascended the throne in about A.D. 500.

Fa-hien, the first Chinese pilgrim who was in India from A.D. 399-A.D. 414, saw at Sarnath four stupas and two monasteries (with resident monks). After his visit, the Sarnath shrines were considerably damaged during the barbarous invasion of North India by the White Huns.

Under the patronage of Harsha (A.D. 606-A.D. 647), the last Buddhist Emperor, Buddhism in India saw great resurgence and grew in strength. Hiuen Tsang, the second Chinese pilgrim, who visited Sarnath in A.D. 638, saw the Dhamek Stupa, the Dharmarajika Stupa and the pillar of Asoka, the main shrine and many other smaller stupas. Describing the main shrine (Mulagandha Kuti), Hiuen Tsang says:

> "Its precincts are divided into eight portions (sections) connected by a surrounding wall. There are fifteen hundred priests in this convent who study the Little Vehicle according to the Sammitiya School. In the great enclosure is a Vihara about 200 feet high; above the roof is a figure of the Amra, mango fruit, with golden cover. The foundations of the building are of stone, and so also are the stairs; but the towers and niches are of brick. The niches are arranged on the four sides in a hundred successive lines, and in each niche is a golden figure of Buddha. In the middle of the Vihara is a figure of Buddha made of teeushih (native copper). It is a life-size figure and is represented as turning the Wheel of the Law (preaching)."

Sarnath was ravaged by Mahmud Ghazni and his forces in A.D. 1017. However, Sarnath shrines were restored soon. According to a record dated 1026, of the reign of Mahipala of the Pala dynasty, two brothers Sthirapala and Vasantapala restored the two monuments, namely, Dharmarajika and

Dharmachakra stups and also added a new shrine of stone.

That Sarnath continued to be a living shrine in the 11th century is evident from six fragments of a stone inscription found in the ruins of the monastery to the east of the Dhamek stupa. It says that a Mahayana monk had a copy of the Ashtasahasrika holy text prepared in 1058 and presented it with other things to the Bhikkhu Sangha living in the monastery known as Sadharmachakra Pravartana-Mahavihara.

The last known patron of the Sarnath shrines was Queen Kumaradevi, wife of King Govindachandra (1114-1154) of the Gahadavala dynasty who made himself master of Kanauj, Ayodhya and Banaras, Kumaradevi, a pious Buddhist lady, built a large monastery at Sarnath named Dharmachakra-Jina-Vihara. After this event, dark clouds engulfed Sarnath and its glory faded for ever.

Sarnath remained deserted and neglected for about 600 years. Even the existence of such a holy place was not known. Then under tragic circumstances Sarnath came to the notice of the modern world. This happened in 1794 when the magnificent Dharmarajika Stupa, which was still standing intact, was dismantled by Jagat Singh, Diwan of Raja Chet Singh of Banaras, just for the sake of building material required for a housing colony, which he called Jagatgunj, after his own name. When this stupa was being pulled down, Jagat Singh's workmen found at a depth of 8.25 m from the top a large round stone box with a green marble relic casket with human bones, pearls, gold leaves and other jewels. These body-relics, which apparently belonged to the Buddha and were enshrined in this stupa by Asoka, were thrown by Jagat Singh in the river Ganga.

This act of vandalism might have gone unnoticed but for a report about this discovery by Mr. Janothan Duncan, Commissioner of Banaras. Mr. Duncan's report published in 1798 in the "Asiatic Researches" attracted public attention to the ruins of Sarnath. The first British national to take interest in Sarnath was Col. C. Mackenzie. He carried out some exploration in 1815 and the sculptures found by him are now in the Indian Museum, Calcutta.

In 1835-1836, Alexander Cunningham carried out

excavations at Sarnath. He opened the Dhamek Stupa and found inside it a stone slab inscribed with the Buddhist creed. rediscovered the stone box containing the relic-casket of the Dharmarajika stupa and also explored the monastery and a temple to the north of Dharmarajika Stupa. All the findings of Cunningham are preserved in the Indian Museum, Calcutta.

Another tragedy struck Sarnath soon after Cunningham's visit, when over forty sculptures and carved stones left behind by Cunningham, and about sixty cartloads of stones from the Sarnath shrines were used in the construction of the two bridges on the river Varuna. Some material was also used in the Queens College building which now houses Sanskrit Vishwavidyalaya, and the Railway Buildings.

In 1851-1852, Major Kittoe, Government Archaeological Enquirer, excavated numerous monuments around the Dhamek Stupa and also a quadrangular building now marked as monastery VI. After him excavation work was continued by E. Thomas and subsequently by Professor Fitz Edward Hall and by C. Horne in 1865.

In 1904-1905, F. C. Oertel undertook major excavation work at Sarnath. He exposed the main shrine, found the Asokan pillar and its capital and unearthed a large number of sculptures and inscriptions. His most important find was the famous image of Buddha preaching the First Sermon representing the highest achievement of Buddhist art in A.D. fifth century.

The excavations at Sarnath were further undertaken by Sir John Marshal in 1907, by H. Hargreaves in 1914-1915 and lastly by Daya Ram Sahni in 1922.

The Buddhist monuments so far discovered and exposed at Sarnath are the following:

1. Dhamek Stupa (originally Asokan)
2. Dharmarajika Stupa (Asokan-3rd century B.C.)
3. Asokan Pillar
4. Apsidal temple (Mauryan)
5. Mulagandhakuti—Main Shrine (Gupta period) (4th century-6th century)
6. Monastery I—Dharma-Chakra-Jina-Vihara of Kumara-devi (12th century)

7. Monastery II (Kushana and Gupta period)
8. Monastery III (Gupta period)
9. Monastery IV (Gupta period)
10. Monastery V (Gupta period)
11. Monastery VI (8th century-9th century, built over an earlier structure of the Gupta period)
12. Monastery VII (10th century-11th century, built over an earlier structure).

Of the above, four monuments are considered more sacred because of their association with the Buddha. They are the Dhamek Stupa, the Dharmarajika Stupa, the Main shrine and the Asokan pillar. The spot called Chankama, marking Buddha's promenade, is the fifth sacred spot.

C. OBJECTS OF INTEREST

1. Dhamek Stupa

The Dhamek Stupa, the sole surviving symbol of the ancient glory of Sarnath, is now generally regarded to mark the original spot where Lord Buddha first encountered the five Parivrajikas and where He delivered the first sermon. The location of this Stupa in relation to the other four monuments associated with the life of the Buddha at Sarnath also gives credence to this identification. As indicated by the inscription of Mahipala I of the Pala dynasty dated 1026 A.D., the Dhamek Stupa was earlier known as Dharmachakra Stupa.

The Dhamek Stupa originally built by Asoka is a solid cylindrical tower, 28.50 m in diameter at the base and 33.53 m in height or 42.06 m including the foundations. The structure consists of a circular stone drum to a height of 11.20 m resting on the ground without the usual rectangular basement. Above this drum rises the cylindrical mass of brickwork. Halfway up the base are eight niches which must have held images; immediately below them runs a broad course of beautifully carved yet elaborate ornament with geometrical and floral patterns with a combination of human figures and birds. Its present stone with ornamental carving is of the Gupta period.

2. Dharmarajika Stupa

The ruins of the Dharmarajika Stupa are a bit further to the north. The original stupa built by Asoka was 13.49 m in diameter. The first addition was made during the Kushana period. The second enlargement came in A.D. 500 or A.D. 600, century with the addition of circumabulatory path (pradakshinapatha), nearly 4.88 m wide around the stupa and encompassed by a solid outer wall, 1.35 m high, pierced by four doorways in four directions. In the third enlargement in the seventh century, the pradakshinapatha was filled up and access to the stupa was provided by placing four monolithic staircases. The next two additions were made in the ninth century-eleventh century. The last encasing of the Dharmarajika stupa took place when the monastery of Kumaradevi was built in A.D. twelfth century. The Dharamarajika stupa was demolished in 1794 by Jagat Singh of Varanasi.

3. Mulagandhakuti (Main Shrine)

Towards the north of the Dharmarajika Stupa are the ruins of the Main Shrine. The building is square on plan, 18.29 m along each side, and faces the east. The Mulagandhakuti, according to Hiuen-Tsang, was about 61 m high. The ruins of the Dharmarajika Stupa and the Mulagandhakuti mark the place where Lord Buddha lived during His stay at Sarnath. While the Buddha used to sit in meditation in the Mulagandhakuti, he used to take walk in the courtyard. That it was so has been confirmed by the discovery of a colossal Bodhisattva statue, installed by Bhikshu Bala of Mathura, in A.D. 1st century between the Mulagandhakuti and the Dharmarajika Stupa, the site of the Buddha's Chankama (promenade).

4. Asokan Pillar

The Asokan Pillar, stands towards the West of the Main shrine. This pillar appears to have been put up by Asoka at the spot where the Buddha first established the Sangha, comprising the Panchvargiya Bhikkhus, Yasa and his fifty-four friends and companions. No wonder, Asoka engraved an edict on this pillar warning the monks and nuns against schism in the Sangha. He says: 'No one shall cause division in the Order of Monks.'

The original pillar was 15.25 m high and was surmounted by the famous lion-capital with a crowning dharmachakra fitted above the heads of four lions. The stump standing in situ is 2.03 m high.

5. The Museum

The Museum, which was established in 1910, houses the antiquities discovered at Sarnath from 1904 onwards. The four most important sculptures in this Museum as described by V.S. Agarwala, are:

1. The Lion Capital

"On entering the Main Hall, the visitor sees the most magnificent sculpture of Mauryan art—the lion-capital which once crowned the Asokan pillar. It measures 2.31 m in height and originally consisted of four parts from bottom upwards, viz., (i) bell-shaped vase covered with inverted lotus-leaves (ii) a round abacus (iii) four seated lions emerging from one block and (iv) a crowning dharmachakra with thirty-two spokes, of which only four fragments were recovered. The four crowning lions are of vigorous workmanship and are sculptured with great naturalism. The eyelids have holes for pins to keep in position the gems that were fixed in the sockets of the eyes. There are four running animals on the abacus, namely, an elephant, a bull, a horse and a lion, each separated by a smaller wheel or dharmachakra. The lion-capital is one of the great masterpieces of plastic art of all times.

The symbolism of the capital has been variously explained. The simplest explanation appears to be that the crowning dharmachakra symbolized the dharma or law, the four lions the roaring form of Buddha (Sakyasimha) facing the four directions, the four galloping animals the four quarters as laid down in Buddhist books in connection with the Anotata lake, the four dharmachakras the intermediate regions and the lotus with its overflowing leaves the symbol of creative activity.

2. The Bodhisattva

The next sculpture to the left is the colossal Bodhisattva of red sandstone dedicated by Monk Bala in the third year of

Kanishka. The image is powerfully built and is expressive of the best traditions of Mathura school of sculpture in early Kushana art. The octagonal shaft now set up behind the statue once carried a beautifully carved umbrella exhibited at the northern side of the room. There is an inscription on the post in Kushana Brahmi script recording the details of the installation of the image.

3. The Preaching Buddha

The seated Buddha image showing Buddha cross-legged in the attitude of preaching, is one of the most exquisite creations of Gupta art. The halo in carved with a pair of celestial figures and conventionalised floral scroll-work.

4. Buddha's life panels

There is a stele showing scenes from Buddha's life in four panels, namely (i) Birth (Jati), (ii) Enlightenment (Sambodhi), (iii) First Sermon (Dharmachakra Pravartana) and (iv) Decease (Nirvana). Another stele illustrates the eight events in the life of the Buddha. The four principles are the same as in the preceding one and are carved in the four corners of the slab. The four secondary scenes are carved in two rows in between them and illustrate the presentation of honey by a monkey to Buddha, Buddha taming the mad elephant Nalagiri, Buddha's descent from the heaven of thirty three gods and the great miracle of Sravasti when Buddha multiplied his form a thousandfold."

Mulagandhakuti Vihara

The credit for making Sarnath a living shrine in modern India goes to Anagarika Dharmapala, founder of the Maha Bodhi Society of India. When Dharmapala visited this place in 1891, he found the Holy Isipatana completely in ruins. He resolved to save the decaying Dhamek Stupa, symbol of the First Sermon of the Buddha, and the carvings from the hands of the Vandals. Some years thereafter, he laid the foundation of new Sarnath by purchasing a few bighas of land from a local Zamindar. In 1904, he purchased another 10 bigha of land.

The foundation stone of Mulagandhakuti Vihara, the lift

of new Sarnath, was laid in November, 1922. The name 'Mullagandhakuti' was first used for the monastery in which Lord Buddha actually resided at Sarnath. During the archaeological excavations, a piece of tablet was found on which this name was inscribed. This discovery prompted Anagarika Dharmapala to name the new Vihara as 'Mulagandhakuti Vihara'. The Mulagandhakuti Vihara cost about Rs. 1,20,000 and the principal donor was Mrs. Mary E. Foster of Honolulu. This magnificent Vihara was opened on 11 November 1931 (Kartika Purnima). On the same day, the sacred relics of Lord Buddha, which were discovered from Taxila, Punjab in 1913-1914 by Sir John Marshal, were presented by the Director General of Archaeology to the Maha Bodhi Society on behalf of the Government of India, and enshrined in this Vihara.

The beautiful Ajanta style Frescoes in the Mulagandhakuti Vihara were painted by the famous Japanese artist, Mr. Kosetsu Nosu who spent about three years in executing this splendid work in 1932-1935.

On the left of the Mulagandhakuti Vihara is a cluster of three Bodhi trees in a compound. These were planted there by Anagarika Dharmapala in 1921. These saplings were brought from the historic Bodhi tree at Anuradhapura in Sri Lanka which was planted there by Sanghamitra, the daughter of Asoka, in the third century B.C.

In 1956, the Government of India, as part of the 2500th Buddha Jayanti Celebrations, remodelled the whole of the campus of Sarnath. All the roads leading to Sarnath were widened, the green lawns around the Mulagandhakuti Vihara were newly laid with rose and liliaceous beds and about 60 deer were brought to the new deer park (Mrigadava). A new railway station was constructed at Sarnath in Buddhistic architectural style.

Today, Sarnath is pulsating with life. It has also become an important educational centre. Apart from the Mulagandhakuti Vihara, the Maha Bodhi Society has also established at Sarnath the Mahabodhi School, a Degree College and the Mulagandhakuti Vihara Library.

4

Kushinagar

A. SANCTITY

When the Buddha had turned eighty, He predicated at Vaisali on Magha Purnima day that 'three months hence He would pass away'. Soon the Lord accompanied by His beloved disciple, Ananda, left for Kushinara via Pava.

When, on reaching sala grove of the Mallas of Kushinara, the Buddha saw that His end was coming near. He called Ananda and said "Go now, Ananda, and inform the Mallas of Kushinara, saying This day, in the last watch of the night, the final passing away of the Tathagata will take place".

Not knowing the reason why the Lord had chosen Kushinara as His last resting place, Ananda said, "Let not the Blessed One die in this wattle and daub town, in the midst of jungle. For Lord, there are great cities such as Champa, Rajagriha, Sravasti, Saketa Kosambi and Varanasi. Let the Blessed One die in one of them".

"Say not so, Ananda. Say not so, Ananda."

"Long ago, Ananda, there was a king by name Maha Sudarsana, a King of Kings, a righteous man who ruled in righteousness. This Kushinara, Ananda, was the royal city of King Maha Sudarsana, under the name of Kushavati."

Then Ananda went to inform the Mallas of Kushinara that

the Blessed One had arrived there and would pass away in the last watch of the night. So informed, the Mallas came in large numbers to the Sal grove in the upavana to have the last darshan of the Buddha.

The last few hours were spent by the Buddha in useful counsels and instructions to Ananda:

> "It may be Ananda, that you will say:
> 'Gone is the word of the Master: we have no
> longer any Master now!' But you must not so regard it.
> Ananda; for the Norm and Discipline taught by me,
> shall be your teachers when I am gone."

Then said the Buddha to the monks: "Now O brethren, I do remind ye, 'Subject to decay are all component things. Work for your salvation in earnest'."

Thus preaching, passed away the greatest of the world's religious teachers at the age of eighty on the Vaisakha Purnima day in 544 B.C. or in 483 B.C. lying between the two large Sal trees.

The last rites of the Buddha were performed by the Mallas of Kushinara in a most dignified manner. For six days His body lay in state to enable his disciples to pay homage to the Master. On the seventh day, the Mallas carried the body of the Buddha in a procession to the Makuta-bandhana, where they used to hold their coronation ceremonies. There the Buddha was cremated with full honours under the guidance of Ananda and Maha Kasyapa, who had reached Kushinara by that time.

After the bone-relics had been collected by the Mallas, they kept the same in their Council-Hall and worshipped for seven days. Meanwhile, the news of Buddha's death spread far and wide, and soon there were many claims for the share of the relics. The relics were ultimately divided into eight parts and shared equally by the Mallas of Kushinara, Ajatasatru, the King of Magadha, the Licchavis of Vaisali, the Sakyas of Kapilavastu, the Bulies of Attakapa, Koliyas of Ramagrama, The Mallas of Pava, and a resident of Vethadipa. The vessel containing the remains of the Blessed One was taken by the wise Drona who was instrumental in dividing the

relics to the satisfaction of all.

B. HISTORY

In the course of his pilgrimage to the Buddhist holy shrines in about 250 BC, the pious Asoka visited Kushinara also and erected stupas and pillars at the site. As Buddhism spread in India, Kushinagar developed into a great religious and cultural centre and attracted visitors from all over India and abroad. The first Chinese Pilgrim, Fa-hian paid his homage at the site of the Maha-parinirvana of the Buddha in about A.D. 406. He says, "To the north of the city (Kushinagara) where, between two trees, on the bank of the (southern) Hiranya, the World Honoured One, with his head to the north, passed away; where Subhadra was converted in his last moments; where in his golden-coffin offerings were made for seven days to the World Honoured One; and where eight kings divided the remains of Buddha's cremated body at these places pagodas have been built, as well as monasteries all of which exist to this day."

Hiuen-Tsang, who visited Kushinagar in about A.D. 637, says, "To the north-west of the city, 3 li or 4 li, crossing the Ajitavati (Hiranyavati) river, on the western bank, not far, we come to a grove of Sal trees. In this wood are four trees of an unusual height, which indicate the place where Tathagata died." "There is (here) a great brick Vihara, in which is a figure of the Nirvana of Tathagata. He is lying with his head to the north as if asleep. By the side of this Vihara is a stupa built by Asoka-raja; although in a ruinous state, yet it is some 200 feet in height. Before it is a stone pillar to record the Nirvana of Tathagata: although there is an inscription on, it, yet there is no date as to year or month."

"To the north of the city, after crossing the river, and going 300 paces or so, there is a stupa. This is the place where they burnt the body of Tathagata. The earth is now of a blackish yellow, from a mixture of earth and charcoal. Whoever with true faith seeks here, and prays, is sure to find some relics of Tathagata."

Among the other monuments seen by Hiuen-Tsang were a stupa built over the place where Subhadra died, a stupa over the site of 'Buddha's cremation, where Maha-Kasyapa paid his

last homage to the Buddha, and the fourth one erected by Asoka, with an inscribed pillar in front recording its construction at the place where the relics were divided. Hiuen-Tsang also saw half a dozen other minor Stupas.

Kushinara continued to be a living shrine till about the 12th century as is evident from the construction of a monastery and a chapel attached to it enshrining a colossal statue of the Buddha during the reign of a local chief of the Kalachuri dynasty. Thereafter it appears to have been deserted and in due course it was completely lost into oblivion.

In modern times, the ruins in district Deoria of Uttar Pradesh were first of all visited in 1811-1812 by Dr. Hamilton Buchanan, an officer of the East India Company. He had, however, no idea of the identification of the ruins. In 1854, H.H. Wilson casually alluded to the identity of Kasia, a near-by village with ancient Kushinara. But it was left to the far-sighted Cunningham, who visited the site in 1861-1862, to identify the Kasia ruins with the site of Buddha's Mahaparinirvana. Subsequently, in 1876, A.C.L. Carlleyle, Cunningham's assistant, carried out extensive excavations at the site and completely exposed the Main Stupa and discovered right at its front, the famous Nirvana statue of the Buddha burried in the debris of the ruins of an oblong shrine.

Carlleyle also discovered in 1876 a statue of the Buddha, broken into two pieces, at the shrine locally called Matha-Kuar. He repaired and restored the statue to its original position. Carlleyle also exposed the shrine to which the statue belonged.

When in 1910, the Main Stupa was further examined at a depth of nearly 4.27 m, there it was discovered a small circular brick chamber, containing a copper vessel. On the mouth of this vessel was placed a copper-plate with a reversed cowrie on it. The inscription on the copper-plate contained the text of the Nidana-sutra in Sanskrit and concluded with the statement that the plate had been deposited in the nirvana-chaitya (i.e., this self same stupa) by one Haribala who had also installed the great Nirvana statue in the temple infront). The vessel was found to contain, among other minor objects, some silver coins of Kumaragupta, a Gupta emperor of A.D. fifth century.

The excavations around the Main Stupa and the Nirvana temple undertaken in the year 1904-1907 under J.P.R. Vogel and in the years 1910-1912 under Hiranand Shastri revealed a number of brick-structures which were raised by the devotees from time to time at Kushinara. These excavations yielded important datable finds and inscriptional evidence which showed continuous occupation of Kushinara upto A.D. 12th century. These finds *inter alia* included a clay seal with the representation of the coffin of the Buddha in between two Sal trees and, the legend 'mahaparinirvana' and 'bhikshu-sangha' in two lines; two other seals with a similar legend and a clay tablet with the figure of standing Maitreya and the well-known Buddhist formula. All the legends were in a script assignable to A.D. 4th century.

The sacred site of Buddha's Maha-parinirvana, Kushinara or Kushinagar, as the place is now called is about 3 Kms. south-west of the town of Kasia in district Deoria, U.P. Kushinagar can be more conveniently approached from Gorakhpur city from where it is 55 Km by road.

The first Buddhist to make Kushinagar his permanent resort in modern times was Mahavir Swami. Mahavir was a nephew of Babu Kunwar Singh under whose leadership he took part in India's first War of Independence in 1857. After the death of Babu Kunwar Singh in 1958 Mahavir went to Ceylon via Madras. While in Ceylon (Sri Lanka), he was attracted towards Buddhism and became a monk. In 1890 Ven. Mahavir returned to Kushinara, which was then in ruins, and decided to stay there permanently. Mahavir Swami was responsible for restoring Kushinara to its rightful place as a sacred shrine. He repaired the main temple and constructed a Dharmashala in 1901 for the convenience of the pilgrims. The cost of the Dharmashala was borne by a devout Buddhist, Khezari Babu of Arakan, Burma. A modern Buddha Vihara was constructed by Mahavir Swami at Kushinagar in 1902.

The task of making Kushinagar a living shrine initiated by Mahavir Swami was successfully accomplished by Ven. Chandramani who was born in 1876 in Akyab the district of Arakan, Burma. In 1891 he came to India for studies. Ven. Chandramani, was ordained as a monk at Chittagong in 1903. Thereafter he came to Kushinagar and started living

there. Soon he managed to get possession of the Nirvana temple and made it a living shrine. In 1910 he constructed another Dharmashala for the pilgrims from India and abroad. In 1924, was celebrated for the first time, Buddha Jayanti at Kushinagar and it is a regular feature. He also established a Primary School (1929), a High School (1934) (Mahavir Vidyalaya) and a Degree College (1944) (Buddha College) at Kushinagar. Ven. Chandramani passed away on 8 May 1972. The noble work initiated by him is now being continued by his disciple, Ven. Gyaneshwar, a Burmese monk.

C. OBJECTS OF INTEREST

1. Nirvana Temple

The present Nirvana Temple at Kushinagar was built by the Government of India in 1956, as part of the 2500th Buddha Jayanti Celebrations, on the request of the Buddhists as the ancient temple restored by Carlleyle in 1876 offered practically on space for the pilgrims to circumambulate the shrine.

The 1500 year old Nirvana statue, which is again being worshipped, is 20 feet (6.1 m) in length and is executed out of one block of sandstone of mixed reddish colour probably from Chunar. It represents the Dying Buddha reclining on his right side with his face turned towards the west. It is placed on a 24 feet long brick throne with stone posts at the corners and once faced with stone slabs on all sides. The western side of the pedestal facing the entrance bears sculptures representing three human figures, each carved in a shallow niche cut into a solid block of stone. It is difficult to identify the figures; however, the central figure may be that of the donor, Haribala himself. Right below him an inscription of A.D. 5th century records that the statue was the appropriate religious gift of the Mahavihara—Svamin Haribala and that it was fashioned by 'Dinna'. The reclining Buddha image is believed to be on the very spot where Lord Buddha breathed his last.

2. Main Stupa

The Main Stupa, as repaired and restored in 1927, with the donations of U Po Kyo, is 75 feet high. Inside its drum a chamber, representing a miniature replica of the original Stupa, was constructed at a height of 6.1 m above the ground level. On the morning of 18 March 1927, this chamber was ceremoniously closed, in the presence of sixteen Buddhist monks headed by Ven. U. Chandramani. Numerous objects of gold, silver and copper, and a copper-plate inscription was deposited inside recording the fact and circumstances of the discovery and identification of the monuments and the site, and its restoration.

3. Matha Kuar

The Matha-Kuar temple, is just about two furlongs south-west of the Parinirvana shrine. The colossal statue installed in the shrine is 3.05 m in height and is carved out of the blue stone of the Gaya region and represents Buddha seated under the Bodhi tree in the "earth-touching attitude" (bhumisparsa-mudra) which symbolises the supreme event of His Enlightenment. This statue is about 1000 years old, having been installed in A.D. 10th century. The present temple was built in 1927 out of the donations of two Burmese Buddhists, KPo Kyo and UPo Hlaing.

4. Cremation Stupa

About 1.61 Km to the east of the Matha-Kuar shrine on the road from Kasia to Deoria stands the Cremation Stupa or the Makutabandhana Chaitya of Buddhist tradition near the Ramabhar Jhil or pond which dries up in summer. The site of the Cremation Stupa was a big mound when Cunningham visited Kushinagar in 1861-1862. He tried to dig it but left the attempt. The hidden Stupa was discovered by Hiranand Shastri in 1910 when he exposed the eastern face of the mound and found that it represented an unusually large Stupa. The Cremation Stupa has a large circular drum, 34.14 m in diameter, resting on circular plinth, and is 47.24 m in diameter at the base. In 1956, the entire basement of the Stupa was exposed. In the course of this excavation and of an earlier one in 1910 a large number of clay seals with the usual Buddhist formula inscribed on them in medieval characters were discovered confirming cremation of the Buddha at this site.

5

Sravasti

A. SANCTITY

Sravasti came to be associated with Buddhism under dramatic circumstances. Once when the Buddha was sojourning at Rajagriha, Sudatta, a wealthy merchant of Sravasti or Savatthi, happened to visit his sister who was married to a rich merchant of Rajagriha. On arriving there, he saw preparations being made for meals on a large scale. On knowing that Lord Buddha and his monks had been invited for a meal the following day, he became eager to meet the Blessed One. Early next morning Sudatta set out to meet the Buddha. At the very first meeting, he became a follower of the Buddha and requested the Lord to visit Sravasti.

On returning to Sravasti, Sudatta, who because of his exemplary charity to the poor was popularly known as Anathapindika, meaning 'the feeder of the destitute', decided to build a suitable Vihara for the reception of the Buddha. The only suitable site that could be found near Sravasti was the park of Prince Jeta, son of King Prasenajit. When Sudatta asked him to sell the park, Jeta demanded an exorbitant price, viz., 'as many gold pieces as will cover it'. Sudatta at once agreed, and proceeded to cover the ground with gold coins from his treasury. When all the ground,

except a small piece, was covered, the prince asked Sudatta to desist, and on the uncovered ground Jeta himself erected a gate. Anathapindika also spent a huge amount to raise the magnificent Vihara, and other shrines and monasteries. It is said that the dedication of the vihara was ceremonially gone through in the presence of the Buddha. And the Buddha, in order to commemorate the pious gifts of both, ordered that the vihara should be called "Anathapindika arama of Jetavana-Vihara".

A pictorial representation of the actual deed of the dedication is found in a bas-relief sculpture of the second century B.C. from Bharhut. The inscription below the sculpture says: 'Jetavana Anathapindiko deti Kotisanthatena Keta', i.e., 'Anathapindika dedicates Jetavana, purchased with a layer of crores'. In the scene itself, there is a bullock cart, with the bullocks unyoked sitting beside it, and with the yoke tilted up in the air to show that the cart has been unloaded. In front are Anathapindika and his treasurer counting out the gold pieces brought in the cart. Above them are two other men seated and busily engaged in covering the surface of the garden with the gold coins. To the left are six other figures, most probably Prince Jeta and his friends, and in the very middle of the picture there is Anathapindika again carrying a vessel in both hands in the act of pouring water over Buddha's hands symbolically represented here through a Bodhi tree as a token of presentation. The illustration has also two monasteries labelled as Gandha-kuti and Kosamba-kuti. Apparently, these are the representations of the actual temples constructed by Anathapindika at Sravasti for the use of the Buddha and the Sangha.

The same theme is portrayed in less details in sculptures at Bodh Gaya as well as Amaravati.

Another important monastery erected at Sravasti for the use of the Buddha was 'Purvarama'. It was erected, to the east of the city, by Visakha, daughter-in-law of a rich merchant of Sravasti, namely, Migara, a follower of Jainism. Visakha, who came from a Buddhist family, persuaded her father-in-law to take refuge in the Buddha. Migara was so much impressed by the devotion and piety of Visakha that he hailed her as his mother. In the Buddhist literature, therefore,

she is also known as Migaramata.

The Kosala King Prasenjit or Pasendi was hitherto a supporter of the Jainas and the Ajivakas. Inspired by his son, Jeta, the King visited Buddha at Jetavana and heard a sermon which led to his conversion. Later, the King built 'Punya Sala' a hall near his Palace for the use of the Buddha. One of the Bharhut sculptures depicts very beautifully a visit of King Prasenjit to the Punya Sala. Here the King is shown coming out of the city gate in a royal procession in a chariot drawn by four horses. Behind the chariot is the palace gateway, through which some people are passing. The Punya Sala or "Hall of Religious Merit" is also shown in the illustration. The building, probably an exact replica of the Punya Sala, is a two-storeyed edifice. In the middle of the open-pillard lower room there is placed the Buddhist Wheel of the Law. It is labelled as 'Bhagavato dhamma Chakam', that is 'Buddha's Dharma Chakra', and represents the Buddha. The Wheel has a garland hanging from its axle and is surmounted by an umbrella. On each side stands a worshipper with both hands joined in an attitude of devotion.

Out of forty-five rainy seasons, the Buddha spent as many as 25 rainy seasons, 24 of them continuously (from 21-44) at Sravasti. Since the Buddha had spent a major part of his missionary life at Sravasti, majority of the sermons recorded in the Tripitaka were delivered by the Blessed One while staying at Jetavana. According to Rahul Sanskrityayana, out of 150 suttas of the Mijjhima Nikaya as many as 65 suttas were delivered in Jetavana; out of the suttas of the Samyutta and Anguttara Nikayas, more than three-fourths were delivered in Jetavana. And out of 350 rules of discipline for the monks, 294 rules were prescribed by the Buddha while staying at Jetavana and Purvarama at Sravasti.

Such a close association of the Buddha with Sravasti enhances its sanctity and prestige. But Pravasti became sacred to the Buddhists as one of the holy places of pilgrimage as it was here that the Buddha performed the greatest miracle. It is said that King Prasenjit. who had embraced the Dhamma and regularly visited Buddha at Jetavana, was confronted with a challenge, from his former co-adherents of the Jaina and Ajivaka faiths, to prove how Buddha excelled them in

miraculous powers. The Buddha responded to the challenge and the result was the greatest miracle. In a series of miraculous episodes, Buddha is said to have created multiple representations of Himself, seated and standing on lotuses and causing fire and water to emanate from His body. Sculptural representations of this miracle are profuse in Buddhist art.

B. HISTORY

Sravasti continued to grow as a Buddhist shrine after the demise of the Buddha. Asoka visited it in the 3rd century B.C. as part of his pilgrimage of the holy Buddhist shrines and erected two pillars, each 70 ft. high on the left and right sides of the eastern gate of Jetavana. Asoka is also said to have built a Stupa to enshrine the relics of Buddha adjoining the well from which Buddha used to have water drawn and a place where He used to walk and preach.

During the Kushana rule, in A.D. 1st century-A.D. 2nd century, at Jetavana, new shrines were erected and images of the Buddha installed. Most of the Stupas and temples of this period survive in ruins.

By the time Fa-hian visited Sravasti around A.D. 407, Buddhism in the city of Sravasti had decayed. He found the Stupas of Sudatta and Angulimala, and the Vihara of Mahaprajapati in ruins. Some of the Budhist edifices had been superimposed by Brahmanical temples. At Jetavana, however, Fa-hian was welcomed by the monks with great wonder. There he saw the monastery built by Anathapindika "with the door facing east, and on each side stone pillar; that on the left having at its top the figure of a wheel, and that on the right a similarly placed figure of an ox." He adds, "the water in the ponds was clear, the trees luxuriant in foilage, with flowers of various hues, truly so beautiful to behold that it was named the Shrine of the Garden of Gold."

Fa-hian further adds that "the great courtyard of the Shrine of the Garden of Gold has two entrances; one on the east side and the other on the west. This garden is on the spot on which Sudatta, the elder, spread out gold money in order to buy the ground. The shrine is in the middle of it. Buddha spent more time here than anywhere else, expounding the Faith and making converts. At all the places where he

walked in meditation or sat down, pagodas have been raised, each with its name inscribed." Outside Jetavana, Fa-hian recognised the ruins of Purvarama, built by Lady Visakha.

Hiuen-Tsang who visited Sravasti in A.D. 637-A.D. 638 found at a wild ruin. Among the deserted buildings he saw the Stupas of Sudatta and Angulimala and the vihara of Prajapati, all seen earlier by Fa-hian. In addition to these, Hiuen-Tsang noticed the ruins of the 'Hall of Law' built by King Prasenjit.

By the time Hiuen-Tsang came, Jetavana had decayed much and there was none living in the monasteries. Among the few edifices still surviving were the two pillars of Asoka and a solitary brick temple with an image of Buddha. Hiuen-Tsang also saw the towering vihara which was noticed by Fa-hian.

After Hiuen-Tsang's visit, there appears to have been a revival of activity at Jetavana. A number of inscribed sealings and Buddhist sculptures such as the images of Lokanatha, Trailokyavijaya, Avalokitesvara, Simhanada Lokeshvara and Jambhala have been discovered which belong to the eighth and ninth centuries.

The last patrons of the Jetavana shrines were the Gahadavala Kings of Kanauj, Madanapala and his son Govindachandra. Inscriptions of their reigns were found in Jetavana in a monastery which, to this day, is better preserved than the rest of the ruins. Madanapala's record, which is dated Samvat 1176 (A.D. 1119), records that the King's Minister Vidyadhara, forsaking the Saiva religion, devoted his wealth to the foundation of a vihara at Jetavana. The other inscription of the reign of Govinda Chandra (A.D. 1129-A.D. 1130) records the royal gift of six villages around Sravasti to Buddhabhattaraka and other monks of Jetavana-mahavihara. Apparently, this liberal gift was largely due to the inducement of Govindachandra's Buddhist queen Kumaradevi, whose benefactions to the Sarnath shrine are well-known.

After A.D. twelfth century the Jetavana shrines were lost into oblivion and completely forgotten.

The ancient city of Sravasti is at present a collection of twin ruins called Sahet-Mahet. The site is 21 Kms. west of Balrampur, a station on the Gorakhpur-Gonda loop line of the North-Eastern Railway. The main road running from

Balrampur to Bahraich, which also forms part of the Delhi-Assam link road, passes by the site.

The twin ruins of Sahet-Mahet were first of all identified with the ancient Sravasti by Sir A. Cunningham. He excavated the Jetavana (Sahet) ruins in 1863 and assigned them numbers upto 16. Subsequently the excavations were carried out by Vogel, Marshall and Daya Ram Sahni during 1907-1908 and 1910-1911.

In modern times, the Burmese and the Chinese Buddhists were the first to think of Sravasti. The first building to be built at Sravasti was Daw Dwe's Dharmashala and Temple built by two Burmese ladies at the instance of Ven. U. Chandramani Maha Thera of Kushinagar. Ven. Ren Chen was the founder of the Chinese Buddhist Temple with a nine-storey Stupa in the Chinese style which can be seen from a distance.

Some improvements were made at Sravasti by the Government in 1956 when the present Inspection House was built for the convenience of foreign pilgrims. But the fortunes of Sravasti changed for the better only in 1969 with the arrival of Ven. M. Sangharatana Nayaka Maha Thera who was resident monk at Sarnath for a number of years and Joint Secretary of the Maha Bodhi Society of India. As a result of his efforts, the Government of India has fenced the otd Jetavana Monastery and its surroundings to prevent stray animals and has also added a beautiful garden. The remains of ancient temples and monasteries are now being protected and preserved well.

Ven. M. *Sangharatana has since constructed the Sri Lankaramaya Temple and Rest House, mainly with the help of Buddhists of Sri Lanka and the Sri Lanka Government. The Bharatiya Baudha Shiksha Parishad, Sravasti, founded by Ven. Sangharatana has also opened a school at Sravasti. The Thai Buddhists have recently, in 1982 established a monastery at Sravasti.

C. OBJECTS OF INTEREST

1. Jetavana

The shrines at Jetavana as we see to-day are: 1, 19 Temples

*He passed away in January 1985.

and Monasteries; 2, 3, 6, 7, 11, 12 Temples; 5, 8, 9, 17, 18 Stupas; and G.F., Monasteries. Of these the most important ones are briefly described below:

Temple 2, marks the site of the original Temple called Gandhakuti built by Anathapindika as part of the Jetavana monastery. Gandhakuti is one of the most sacred Temples in Jetavana, having been hallowed by the personal use of the Buddha. The present structure is a late renovation, of which only the low walls and plinths are extant. It is believed that Gandhakuti was at one time a wooden structure of seven storeys and that it enshrined a sandalwood image of the Buddha. Fa-hian saw, however, only a brick building of two storeys; according to the information gathered by him the wooden one having been burnt down. Hiuen-Tsang found the brick structure in utter ruin.

Temple 3, is believed to mark the very spot where stood the original Kosambakuti built by Ananthapindika and hallowed by the personal use of the Buddha. In front of the temple are two brick terraces erected on the original promenade (chankama) used by Buddha for his walks.

A large Budhisattva image discovered here bears an inscription of A.D. first century. It is recorded that the statue was set up at the chankama of Buddha at Kosambakuti by Bala in the reign of a Kushana King. Hiuen-Tsang (seventh century) saw the image within a small brick temple 'which rose alone amidst the surrounding ruins'.

Temple and Monastery 19, is one of the largest buildings at Jetavana and contains a shrine, a well within the courtyard, twentyone cells for the use of monks and a portico. The structure seems to have been rebuilt three times on practically the same foundation. The earliest building at the site, of which portions of the wall are visible, is datable to about the A.D. sixth century.

In one of the cells of the monastery was discovered a clay tablet representing Buddha seated in dharmachakramudra and containing the Buddhist creed in three lines in Gupta script. The next edifice built on the same foundations is assignable to the tenth century. Among the finds of this period recovered at the site are a number of Buddha images, of which one is in bhumisparsha-mudra with Avalokitesvara

and Maitreya carved in miniature as attendants. Another sculpture shows Buddha receiving a bowl from a monkey. This refers to the famous incident of the presentation of honey by a monkey to the Buddha at Vaisali. Both the sculptures bear inscriptions in a script assignable to A.D. ninth century or A.D. tenth century.

In another cell of the monastery was found an inscribed copper-plate charter of Govindachandra of Kanauj of A.D. 1130 recording the grant of certain villages around Sravasti to the monks of Jetavana-mahavihara. This valuable information establishes the identity of the Sahet site with Jetavana.

Stupa H. This Stupa, apparently marks the place where Lord Buddha used to sit while giving discourses to the Buddhist monks and the laity. Sir John Marshal says about its importance; 'Of the Stupas H, J and K, the first mentioned seems to have been invested with particular sanctity; for not only was it rebuilt several times but it is set immediately in front of Temple No. 2, which there is good reason to identify with the famous Gandhakuti and right in the midst of the main road which approaches this sanctuary from the east . . . .'

The Eight Stupas—The adjacent area to the east and north-east of Monastery 19 seems to have been specially utilized for the erection of Stupas, of which eight are visible. One of them yielded an inscribed sealing containing the name of Buddhadeva in the characters of A.D. fifth century.

Stupa 8—Situated close to Monastery G on its west, this structure consists of two Stupas erected one over the other in different periods. An inscribed Bodhisattva image found here indicates approximately the period during which the Stupas were under worship—in that it bears two separate inscriptions, the earlier of which, written in Kushan characters and contemporary with the sculpture, records that it was set up in Jetavana by two brothers, one of whom was Shivadhara, and that a sculptor of Mathura made it, and the later one, incised below, is in the script of the ninth century-tenth century and only contains the Buddhist creed.

Another interesting object in the Jetavana monastery is the *Ananda Bodhi tree*. From its hoary appearance and height it appears to be the very tree which was planted during the life

time of the Buddha. It is not, however, possible to say any thing definite about its age. The story of the plantation of the Ananda Bodhi as given in Pujavaliya. a Sinhalese classic, is as follows:

"In spite of the many amenities available at the Jetavana monastery, Lord Buddha spent there only three months in the year, viz., during the rainy season, and during the other nine months, he was away on each and every hamlet of the vast country. His followers in Savatthi desired his permanent residence in the city but this being impossible they begged him for some token so that they may at least venerate it during his absence. To satisfy the craving of the people, Ananda obtained the Lord's permission to plant a sapling of the Buddhagaya Bodhi tree. Mahamoggallana who was famous for his supernatural powers volunteered to bring the sapling. It was the wish of every one that King Pasenadi should plant it but he declined the honour saying that the tenure of Kings was uncertain and that it were better for a great merchant to do it so that he and his successors may take care of it for all time to come. Thereupon Anathapindika was selected for the honour and, with great ceremonies, he planted it in front of the monastery he himself had built. Lord Buddha blessed and sanctified it by passing one whole night near it in meditation. From that time, it took the place of the Teacher during his absence for the devotees to make their offerings."

Apart from the remnants of the Jetavana Maha-Vihara and the Ananda Bodhi an interesting relic of the past at Jetavana is the very 'well' from where the Buddha used to have water drawn for his personal use. This well has once again been put to use, and pleasantly has very sweet water which the visitors can drink to their heart's content as a blessing of the Buddha.

2. Sravasti City (Mahet)

Leaving Jetavana by the north the visitor can go to the site of the ancient city by taking the road which enters it by the Sobhanatha Gate, one of the openings made in recent past in the high rampart that encompasses the city. The huge mud-fortifications run along a circuit of 3½ miles having the formation of a semi-circular crescent. The inward curve of the crescent faces north-east along the old bank of the

Achiravati (Rapti) river, which in ancient times flowed past in a south-easterly direction. Hieun-Tsang's statement that the royal precincts had a circuit of 20 li agrees with that of the city-site bounded by the fortifications.

As one enters the precincts of the western part of the city from Jetavana, the first building that comes to view is the temple of Sobhanatha set on a high mound. The spot is hallowed as the birth place of Sambhavanatha, the third Jaina Tirthankara.

The notable Buddhist monuments in this area are the remains of two Stupas, locally known as Pakki Kuti and Kachi Kuti.

From the Sobhanatha temple, the road leads to the Pakki Kuti, identified by Cunningham as the remains of the Angulimala Stupa seen by the Chinese pilgrims.

An oft-told story in the ministry of Buddha at Sravasti is the conversion of a robber named Angulimala, the name literally means 'finger-garland'. He was a notorious bandit who harassed the dwellers of the city and the country by killing people and cutting a finger of each person killed in order to make a garland for the presentation to his Guru as 'Guru Dakshina (gift) by a disciple'. He was about to kill his own mother when the Buddha confronted him and made him realize the sin of killing people.

Overcome by the words of the Blessed One, Angulimala threw away his weapons; prostrated at the feet of the Buddha; and begged ordination. So he was ordained by the Buddha. The story of the conversion of Angulimala is depicted at Amaravati. The erstwhile robber later became a good monk and attained arhatship.

Sudatta Stupa

Situated a few yards to the south-east of Angulimala Stupa, is Kachi Kuti, the most imposing monument in this area. This is Sudatta (Anathapindika) Stupa seen by the Chinese pilgrims. The ruins present structural remains of different periods—the earliest is assignable to the Kushan period and the latest to about A.D. twelfth century. It owes its modern name to a renovation in Kacha bricks made to the topmost shrine by a sadhu who lived there for sometime.

A grand plinth, measuring 105 feet from east to west and 12 feet from north to south, and approached from the west by a flight of steps 45 feet long and 14 feet wide with a curved outline at the lower end, presents the most prominent view. It rests for the major portion on an earlier plinth of about 5 feet high of the Kushan period underneath the plinth; at its north-west corner, are the basements of two circular Stupas.

From Kachi Kuti, there are pathways leading to the city-gates Naushara Darwaza and Kand Bhari Darwaza. The remains of Purvarama Monastery and Punya Sala lie buried somewhere in the vast ruins of Sravasti.

6

Sankasya

A. SANCTITY

At Sankasya, the Buddha is believed to have descended to the earth from the Trayastrimsa Heaven (Heaven of the Thirty-three Gods) after preaching to His mother and other Gods. This event is said to have occurred after the great miracle performed by the Buddha at Sravasti. According to tradition, the Buddha came down by a triple ladder, accompanied by the Gods Brahma and Sakra (Indra).

The story of the Buddha's descent from heaven at Sankasya has been a popular theme in early Buddhist art. In the Bharhut illustration, the triple ladder is at the centre of the scene with a Bodhi Tree and Vajrasana at its foot. There is one footprint (of the Buddha) on the top step and a second footprint on the bottom step of the middle ladder. Around the ladder on all sides are a number of spectators, kings, ministers and people awaiting anxiously the return of the Buddha. Somewhat similar scene is depicted at Sanchi.

B. HISTORY

Because of its sacred association with Lord Buddha, Sankasya became an important Buddhist shrine and a number of Stupas and monasteries were erected there in ancient times.

Fa-hian, who visited the site in the first decade of A.D. 5th century, says, "When Buddha was about to come down from heaven to earth, he produced by a miracle three flights of jewelled steps and he himself came down the middle flight which was made of the seven preciosities. Brahma also produced a flight of silver steps to the right, where he was in attendance with a fly-brush in his hand. The God of Heaven, Indra, produced a flight of copper steps to the left, where he was in attendance with an umbrella of the seven preciosities in his hand. Countless hosts of Devas followed Buddha down; and when He reached the earth, the three flights disappeared into the ground except seven steps which remained." Continuing, Fa-hian says: "Asoka built a shrine over the steps, placing on the middle flight a full length image of Buddha. Behind the shrine he raised a stone column sixty feet in height; upon the top he placed a lion, and within the column, at the four sides, images of Buddha."

Fa-hian also notices other stupas and monasteries and says that 'there are here about 1000 priests and nuns, all of whom obtain their food from a common stock and belong, some to the greater vehicle and some to the lesser one.'

When Hiuen-Tsang visited Sankasya in A.D. 636, a number of shrines were still standing. Hiuen-Tsang says:

"To the east of the city 20 li or so is great Sangharama of beautiful construction, throughout which the artist has exhibited his greatest skill. The sacred image of the holy form (of Buddha) is most wonderfully magnificent. There are about 100 priests here, who study the doctrines of the Sammatiya school. Several myriads of 'Pure men' (religious laymen) live by the side of this Sangharama or Convent.

"Within the great enclosure of the Sangharama there are three precious ladders, which are arranged side by side from north to south, with their faces for descent to the east. This is where Tathagata came down on his return from the Trayastrimsas heaven. In old days Tathagata, going up from the 'wood of the conqueror' ascended the heavenly mansions, and dwelt in the Saddharma Hall, preaching the law for the sake of his mother. Three months having elapsed, being desirous to descend to earth, Sakra, King of the Devas, exercising his spiritual power, erected these precious

ladders. The middle one was of yellow gold, the left-hand one of pure crystal, the right-hand one of white silver.

"Tathagata rising from the Saddharma hall, accompanied by a multitude of Devas, descended by the middle ladder. Maha-Brahma-raja holding a white chamara, came down by the white ladder on the right, whilst Sakra, King of Devas (Devendra) holding a precious canopy (parasol), descended by the crystal ladder on the left. Meanwhile the company of Devas in the air scattered flowers and chanted their praises in his honour. Some centuries ago the ladders still existed in their original position, but now they have sunk into the earth and have disappeared. The neighbouring princes, grieved at not having seen them, built up of bricks and stones ornamented with jewels, on the ancient foundations (three ladders) resembling the old ones. They are about 70 feet high. Above them, they have built a Vihara in which is a stone image of Buddha, and on either side of this is a ladder with the figures of Brahma and Sakra, just as they appeared when first rising to accompany Buddha in his descent.

"On the outside of the Vihara, but close by its side, there is a stone column about 70 feet high which was erected by Asoka-raja. It is of a purple colour, and shining as if with moisture. The substance is hard and finely grained. There are carved figures inland, of wonderful execution, on the four sides of the pillar and around it."

Hiuen Tsang further says: "Besides the precious ladder (temple) and not far from it, there is a Stupa, where Tathagata when in the world, bathed himself. By the side of this is a Vihara on the spot where Tathagata entered Samadhi. By the side of the Vihara there is a long foundation wall 50 paces in length and 7 feet high; this is the place where Tathagata took exercise. On the spot where his feet trod are figures of the lotus flower. On the right and left of the wall are (two) little Stupas, erected by Sakra and Brahma-raja. In front of the Stupas of Sakra and Brahma is the place where Utpalavarna the Bhikhuni, wishing to be the first to see the Buddha, was changed into a Chakravarin-raja when Tathagata was returning (from heaven)."

After centuries of oblivion, the ancient Sankasya was identified by General Cunningham in 1842 with the modern

village of Sankisa in the district of Farrukhabad in Uttar Pradesh. The village of Sankisa is situated on a high plateau near the Kali river where the borders of the districts of Farrukhabad, Etah and Mainpuri meet.

From Delhi, Sankisa is 315 kilometres by road via Ghaziabad-Aligarh-Etah-Bewar on National Highway No. 22 (G.T. Road) and from Bewar* via Mohammadabad-Pakhna. From Agra, Sankasya is 175 kilometres via Firozabad-Shikohabad-Mainpuri-Bewar-Mohammadabad-Pakhna. The nearest railway station is Pakhna on the Shikohabad-Farrukhabad line.

C. OBJECTS OF INTEREST

An important relic of the past at Sankasya is the stump of the broken Asoka pillar surmounted by the elephant capital. It has beautiful carvings of lotus and leaves of Bodhi tree.

Nearby is a small modern Buddhist temple under the Bodhi tree. It was constructed in 1957 by Ven. Vijaya Soma, a Buddhist monk from Sri Lanka. The modern shrine has a standing image of Lord Buddha flanked by Brahma and Sakra who are believed to have accompanied the Buddha on His descent from heaven to earth.

About 20 yards to the south of the Asokan Pillar, there is a high mound of solid brick work which was once a Buddhist structure. But it is now surmounted by a temple dedicated to Hindu Goddess Visharidevi. It is believed that the Buddha had descended from heaven at this place.

The Buddhists visit Sankasya in large numbers every year on the Ashvina (Sharad) Purnima (in October) when a religious congregation takes place.

About the people of Sankasya (Kapitha), Hiuen-Tsang had said that "the manners of the people are soft and agreeable. The men are much given to learning." But the modern Sankisa had no school till 1960 when the late Ven. Vijaya Soma of Sri Lanka established a school there. This school now named as 'Bhadant Vijaya Soma Vidya Mandir Higher Secondary School' is playing a very useful role in spreading education in and around Sankisa.

*From Pewar, a shorter route to Sankisa is also available via Dheerpur Junction (Madanpur) and Pakhna Railway station.

7

Vaisali

A. SANCTITY

Vaisali, the capital city of the powerful Licchavis, was closely associated with the Buddha. Lord Buddha is said to have visited Vaisali a number of times. He had also spent two Retreats (Vassa), 5th and 45th at Vaisali. And many distinguished Licchavis had become His disciples. During one of His visits to Vaisali, monkeys are said to have offered the Buddha a pot of honey, an incident that is treated as one of the four great miracles in the life of Gautama Buddha.

Once the Buddha was staying in the Kutagara hall in Mahavana (large grove) at Vaisali. Maha-Prajapati, the foster-mother of the Buddha, who had been earlier refused permission at Kapilavastu by the Blessed One to join the Sangha, came to Vaisali. Covered with dust and with swollen feet, she stood outside the entrance of the great hall in Mahavana, sad and sorrowful.

Venerable Ananda saw her in that state and asked her why she was there. She explained that she was dejected and disappointed as the Buddha had refused to grant ordination to women. Then Ananda went to the Buddha and pleaded for the ordination of Maha-Prajapati.

Finally, the Blessed One agreed to permit ordination of

Prajapati and other Sakyan ladies. Thus the Bhikhuni Sangha (Order of Nuns) came to be established at Vaisali.

Ambapali was the Chief Courtesan of Vaisali. On knowing that the Lord was staying in her mango-grove, Ambapali visited the Buddha and invited Him, for a forenoon meal at her residence. The Buddha accepted her invitation and gave consent by silence. On her way back, Ambapali met the Licchavi nobles who had also come to invite the Buddha but were forestalled by her. They entreated Ambapali and offered her a price for giving up the invitation but she politely declined on the plea that after waiting for a long time she had got the chance and would not miss this golden opportunity. After the meals, Ambapali donated her Ambavana (Mango-grove) for the residence of the monks.

The Buddha spent His last (45th) rainy season (Vassa) at Vaisali and stayed on there afterwards also. Before leaving Vaisali, the Buddha announced on the Maghi Purnima day that three months hence he would attain Nirvana. Thereafter, He set out on His last journey to Kushinara.

The Licchavi nobles erected a grand Stupa over their share of the holy relics of the Buddha which they later brought from Kushinara.

B. HISTORY

The city of Vaisali had become in the early days a stronghold of Buddhism. No wonder, a little over 100 years after the Maha-Parinirvana of the Buddha, the second Buddhist Council was held there. It is said that the monks of the Vajji country had started practising the Ten Points (dasa vathani) which were regarded as unorthodox indulgences by some monks led by Yasa. To settle this dispute the second Council (Sangiti) was convened at Vaisali. Seven hundred monks met under the Presidentship of Ven. Sabbakami. In an unanimous verdict, the Council declared the conduct of the Vajjian monks as unlawful. The Vajji monks, however, refused to accept the verdict. This resulted in a schism in the Sangha and the secession of the Mahasanghikas (Vajji monks). The second Council at Vaisali, therefore, gave a new turn to the development of Buddhism and played an important role in the later day Buddhism.

Fa-hian, the first Chinese pilgrim, visited Vaisali in the opening years of A.D. fifth century. He says, "To the north of the capital there is a large forest and shrine in two sections where Buddha once dwelt, and also a pagoda built over half of the body of Ananda. Inside the city there is the pagoda, still in existence, which the courtesan, Amradarika built in honour of Buddha. Three li to the south of the city, on the west side of the road, there is the garden which Amradarika presented to Buddha for a dwelling place. When Buddha was about to pass away and had issued with his disciples out of the west Gate of the city, He turned himself round to the right and beholding the city of Vaisali said to the disciple, 'This is the last place I shall visit'. Men of later ages have built a pagoda on the spot."

Fa-hian also saw a pagoda built at the place where the second Buddhist Council was held.

Hiuen-Tsang, the second Chinese pilgrim, who came after about 230 years of Fa-hian's visit, describes in greater detail the condition of Vaisali and Buddhist monuments. He says: "The capital city of Vaisali is to a great extent in ruins. There are a few people living in it. To the north-west of the royal city (precinct) 5 li or 6 li, there is a Sangharama with a few disciples. They study the teachings of the Little Vehicle according to the Sammatiya School."

Hiuen-Tsang saw the Stupa built by a Licchavi King to enshrine a portion of the body relics of the Buddha. He also saw "a Stupa built by Asoka-raja and by the side of it a stone-pillar about 50 or 60 feet high, with the figure of a lion on the top".

Hiuen-Tsang further says: "To the South of the Stone Pillar is a tank. This was dug by a band of monkeys (Markata-hrada) for Buddha's use. When he was in the world of old, Tathagata once again dwelt here. Not far to the south of this tank is a Stupa; it was here the monkeys, taking the alms-bowl of Tathagata, climbed a tree and gathered him some honey. Not far to the south is a Stupa; this is the place where the monkeys offered honey to Buddha. At the north-west angle of the lake there is still a figure of a monkey."

Of the numerous Stupas seen by Hiuen-Tsang at Vaisali, the important ones were:

1. W here Tathagata delivered the Vimala Kirti Sutra.
2. Where the aunt of Buddha and other Bhikshunis obtained Nirvana.
3. At the site of the garden of Amra-girl (Amrapali).
4. Where Tathagata walked for exercise.
5. Where Tathagata announced his Nirvana.
6. Where the Licchavis took leave of the Buddha, when He left for Kushinagar, and He gave them his Patra as a token of remembrance.
7. Where the Buddha for the last time gazed upon the city of Vaisali.
8. Where the relics of Ananda were enshrined.

Nothing much is known about Vaishali after Hiuen-Tsang's visit in A.D. 7th century. It lay in ruins, unknown, unheard of till Alexander Cunningham identified the ruins at and around Basrah in the Muzaffarpur district of Bihar with ancient Vaishali.

An effort to revive the glory of Vaishali is being made by the Vaishali International Buddhist Society, Muzaffarpur, which was founded by Sri Pashupatinath Sinha in 1960. Vaishali is 36 Km. by road from Muzaffarpur and 55 Km. from Patna across the Ganga. Keeping in view the historical importance of Vaishali, the government of Bihar has recently formed an independent district of Vaishali, with headquarters at Hajipur, which is 35 Km. by road from Vaishali. The ancient city of Vaishali, the seat of the first republic of the world, now comprises of the villages of Basrah, Chakramdas and Kamman Chhapra in Vaishali district, and the villages of Bania, Basukund and Kolhua in Muzaffarpur district.

C. OBJECTS OF INTEREST

1. Asokan Pillar

At Kolhua, there stands a monolithic pillar erected by Asoka. It is made of highly polished sandstone surmounted by a bell-shaped capital supporting a life size figure of lion.

Though devoid of any inscription, this pillar appears to be part of the line of pillars in the Champaran and Muzaffarpur districts—Rampurva, Lauriya, Araraj, Lauriya-Nandangarh, Kolhua—belived to have marked stages of Emperor Asoka's journey from Patliputra to Lumbini, which he undertook in the 20th year of his consecration. This lion pillar perhaps also commemorates the last sermon of Lord Buddha at Vaishali.

2. Buddha Stupa-I

The ruins of the Asokan Stupa seen by Hiuen-Tsang are to the north-west of the Pillar. The ruined mound now known as Buddha Stupa-I is 15 feet high. Beneath it was discovered a stone casket containing a portion of the sacred ashes of the Budha.

3. Buddha Stupa-II

This Stupa was excavated in 1958. From its base also another casket containing the sacred ashes of the Buddha was discovered.

4. Ancient Tank

Nearby the Pillar, to the south, there is a small tank which has been identified by Cunningham with the ancient monkeys' tank (Markata-hrada) believed to have been dug by a band of monkeys for the use of the Buddha.

5. Raja Vishal ka Garh

The ruins of Raja Vishal ka Garh consist of a large brick covered mound about 8 feet high from the surrounding level and about one and half kilometre in circumference with an about 140 feet moat around it. It is said to be the ancient Assembly Hall where the 7707 representatives of the Vijjian Federal Assembly used to meet and discuss the problems of the day.

6. The Museum

There is also a small archaeological museum at Vaisali having interesting antiquities discovered during excavations in the area.

7. Jain Temple

Vaisali has also been identified as the Birth Place of Lord Mahavira, the 24th Jain Tirthankara. There is a newly constructed Jain Temple at Basrah.

8

Rajgir

A. SANCTITY

Rajagriha (Pali: Rajagaha), modern Rajgir, was known in ancient days by more than one name. In the Ramayana, it is called Vasumati. In the Mahabharata and in the Puranas, it is known as Barhadrathapura. Some Sanskrit Buddhist texts and the Jaina texts call it Kusagrapura. It was also known as Girivraja because of the hills encircling it on all sides. The hills that surround Rajagriha are traditionally five in number, though their names slightly vary according to Buddhist, Jaina and Hindu traditions. In the Pali texts, the five hills are known as Vebhara (Vaibhara), Pandava Vepulla (Vaipulya), Gijjhakuta (Gridhrakuta) and Isigili (Rishigiri).

At the time of the Buddha, Rajagriha was the capital of Magadha and was ruled by King Seniya Bimbisara (circa 543 B.C.-491 B.C.). After turning the Wheel of Law at Sarnath, Lord Buddha came to Rajagriha. On knowing that the Sakyan Prince whom he had met years ago and tried to dissuade him from the path of holiness has since become a Buddha, King Bimbisara hastened to visit the Blessed One. He presented the Bamboo-grove (Venuvana, Veluvana) to the Buddha and became His lay devotee. The Buddha accepted it and stayed there for some time.

There resided at that time at Rajagriha a religious teacher, Sanjaya with about 250 disciples. Among them were two young disciples, namely, Sariputta and Moggallana. Not satisfied with the teachings of Sanjaya, they were in search of something better. One day per chance Sariputta saw Assaji, one of the Panchvargiya Bhikkhus, going for alms in the city of Rajagriha. Impressed by the dignified and pleasant deportment of Assaji, Sariputta approached him and asked, "Friend, who is your teacher? Whose Dhamma do you prefess?"

On knowing about the Buddha and His teachings in brief from Assaji, Sariputta told all about them to his friend, Moggallana. Soon thereafter, both of them became Buddha's disciples. In the Buddhist history, Sariputta and Moggallana are known as the chief disciples of the Buddha.

In subsequent years, the Buddha visited Rajagriha several times and passed as many as five rainy seasons (2nd, 3rd, 4th, 17th and 20th) there. The favourite resorts of the Buddha at Rajagriha were the Venuvana (bamboo-grove) and the Gridhrakuta (the vulture peak). As a result of this missionary work, many nobles and other householders of Rajagriha became lay disciples of the Buddha. An important lay disciple was Jivaka, the noted physician of the royal family. Following the conversion of Sariputta and Moggallana, a large number of parivrajikas also became followers of the Buddha. Thus Rajagriha had become an important centre of Buddhism during the life time of the Buddha.

Rajagriha was also the scene of a revolt against the Buddha by Devadatta, a cousin of the Buddha, who had joined the Sangha along with Ananda, Upali and other Sakyas. Devadatta wanted to be named as Buddha's successor which the Buddha refused. In frustration, Devadatta tried to kill the Buddha. First by letting loose a rougue elephant. Nalagiri which the Buddha tamed; and second time by hurling a rock when the Tathagata was resting on the Gridhrakuta, which injured a toe of the Buddha. In his attempt to bring schism in the Sangha and harming the Buddha, Devadatta was assisted by Ajatasatru, who had imprisoned his father, King Bimbisara, and usurped the throne.

As the story goes, Ajatsatru, after the murder of his father

was unable to sleep. So to seek solace, he decided to wait on the Buddha. The King left at night by torch-light, mounted on an elephant and accompanied by a large number of attendants on elephants and on foot. This episode is illustrated at Bharhut. The sculpture shows Ajatasatru's procession to the Venuvana; his dismounting from the elephant near the dwelling place of the Buddha; and lastly worshipping the footprints of the Buddha. The inscription below this Bharhut sculpture says, "Ajatasatru Bhagavato Vindate."

Ajatsatru ruled from 491 B.C.-459 B.C. He later relented, sought pardon of the Buddha and became his follower. After the Mahaparinirvana, Ajatasatru raised a lofty and beautiful stupa over the relics of the Buddha which he had obtained from Kushinara.

When the Master had gone, His disciples thought of codifying His teachings in order to preserve their pristime purity. For this purpose, a Sangiti or Council was held at Rajagriha under the Presidentship of Ven. Kasyapa. At this Council, the Sutta-pitaka was codified on the basis of the answers given by Ven. Ananda to the questions put by Ven. Maha Kasyapa. Ven. Upali was the chief authority on the Vinaya. According to tradition, this Council was held in a large hall, in front of the Saptaparni cave, specially built for the purpose by King Ajatasatru.

B. HISTORY

Rajagriha last political status after the demise of Ajatasatru as his successor Udayin *ci.* 459 B.C.-443 B.C.) transferred his capital from Rajagriha to Pataliputra (modern Patna). But Rajagriha continued to be an important Buddhist centre for centuries thereafter. Because of its importance, Asoka erected a Stupa and a Pillar, with an elephant-capital, at Rajagriha. When about 650 years later Fa-hian visited Rajagriha in A.D. fifth century, he saw the Venuvana monastery with resident monks as well as another monastery and a number of Stupas raised by the devotees on the various spots associated with the Buddha.

Fa-hian went up the vulture peak also and worshipped at the cave where the Buddha had sat in meditation. He says,

"Three li from the summit there is a cave in the rock, facing south, where Buddha sat in meditation. Also the place where Buddha was pacing up and down, east and west, in front of his cave when Devadatta from among the crags in the north of the mountain wickedly threw a rock at him and wounded him at the toe."

Fa-hian adds: "Thirty paces to the north-west, there is another cave, in which Ananda was sitting in meditation when the Mara changed himself into a vulture and stood before the cave in order to frighten Ananda; but the Buddha by his divine power pierced the rock, and stretching his hand stroked Ananda's shoulder, so that his fear was allayed. The tracks of the bird and the whole for Buddha's hand are both still to be seen; hence the name Vulture-Cave Mountain."

Hiuen-Tsang, the second Chinese pilgrim, visited Rajagriha in about A.D. 637-A.D. 638. He saw the Buddhist monasteries and Stupas seen by Fa-hian, and many more. Hiuen-Tsang gives a graphic account of what he saw at Rajagriha, which had been practically deserted by then. About the Stupa built by Asoka he says that it is about 60 feet high; by the side of it is a stone pillar, which is about 50 feet high, and on the top has the figure of an elephant. 'He also gives an interesting account of the Hot Springs and says that 'on the right and left of the warm springs are many Stupas and the remains of Viharas close together.'

Hiuen-Tsang saw the Venuvana monastery in ruins where only the foundation and the brick walls of a Vihara existed. He also notices the Pippala stone house, said to be the cave of Mahakassapa, the Saptaparni cave and numerous Stupas, including one enclosing the relics of half of the Body of Ananda.

About the Vulture Peak, Hiuen-Tsang says: "The summit of this mountain is long from east to the west and narrow from north to south. There is a brick Vihara on the borders of a steep precipice at the western end of the mountain. It is high and wide and beautifully constructed. The door opens to the east. Here Tathagata often stopped and preached the law. There is now a figure of him preaching the law, of the same size as life."

"To the east of this Vihara, is a long stone on which Tathagata trod as he walked up and down for exercise. This is the place where Devadatta flung a stone from a distance to strike Buddha."

"South of this, below the precipice, is a stupa. Here Tathagata delivered the Saddharma-Pudarika Sutra."

There is an evidence to show that Rajagriha remained a popular Buddhist shrine till about A.D. 12th century. Thereafter, it fell into ruins and was forgotten like other Buddhist shrines. Ancient Rajagriha has since been identified with Rajgir in the Patna district of Bihar.

The modern village of Rajgir, covers a part of New Rajagriha built by Ajatasatru. New Rajagriha is said to have been "protected by a massive wall of earth, pentagon in shape, with a circuit of nearly 5 kms. On the south, towards the hills, a portion of the fortified area was cut off to form a citadel. The wall once surrounding the town has almost entirely disappeared; but the citadel wall is still fairly preserved, and a small portion of its southern section, with a gateway, has been exposed. The wall is about 4.57 metres to 5.50 metres thick and stands to a height of 3.35 metres at places."

C. OBJECTS OF INTEREST

1. Hot Springs

Most of the hot water springs at Rajgir are at the fort of the Vaibhara Hill. These hot springs find mention in the sermons of the Buddha.

2. Pippala Cave

A little above the hot springs, on the eastern slope of the Vaibhara hill, is a remarkable stone structure locally known as the machan (watch-tower) or Jarasandha-ki-baithak. This has been identified with the Pippala cave mentioned in the Buddhist texts and the accounts of the Chinese pilgrims. Some Pali texts describe the Pippala cave as the residence of Maha Kasyapa, the President of the First Buddhist Council; and it is said that on one occasion Buddha visited Maha Kasyapa when the latter was lying sick in the Pippala cave.

3. Saptaparni Cave

The Saptaparni Cave, where the First Buddhist Council

was held after the demise of the Buddha, is situated on the top of the Vaibhara hill beyond the modern Jaina temple of Adinatha. A few metres to the east of this temple there is a narrow footpath descending the rugged northern scarp of the ridge to a level of about 30 metres below the temple and leading to a long artificial terrace in front of a line of six (the number might originally have been seven) caves, all contained in a semi-circular bend of the rock. These are the Saptaparni caves. The terrace in front of the caves is about 36.57 metres long and 10.36 metres wide at the east and 3.65 metres at the west. The retaining wall marking the outer edge of the terrace was constructed of large unhewn stones set without any mortar, but only a small part of it.

4. Asokan Stupa

To the west of New Rajagriha, on the other side of the stream Sarasvati, is a large mound which marks the site of a Stupa, that of Asoka according to Hiuen-Tsang. The mound was 10 metres high when it was excavated by the Archaeological Survey in 1905-1906. In the western part of the mound, which was opened down a depth of 3 metres only, were found a number of miniature clay Stupas, about 5 cm. high and 2.5 cm. in diametre. Inside each of these miniature Stupas was a tiny clay tablet with the Buddhist creed ye dharma etc., inscribed in characters of the eighth or ninth century.

5. Karanda Tank

About 150 metres to the north of the modern temples near the hot springs, there is a large tank immediately to the right of the footpath. This has been identified with the Karanda tank where the Buddha used to take his bath.

6. Venuvana (Bamboo Park)

A short distance from the southern bank of Karanda tank there is a large mound overgrown with shrubs and surmounted by a number of Muslim tombs. This mound is believed to mark the site of the Venuvana Vihara built by King Bimbisara for the residence of the Buddha. The little garden on the other side of the stream has been identified as a part of

Venuvana, but it seems to be the Tapodarama monastery of the Pali Scriptures. The excavations here brought to light the foundations of a room and the bases of nine brick Stupas surrounded by concrete floor. Some clay tablets impressed with the Buddhist creed in characters of the tenth or eleventh century, were also discovered.

Not far off from the hot springs on the main road leading from Rajgir to Banganga defile, one comes across the north gate of the outer fortifications of Old Rajagriha near the narrow gap between the Vaibhara and Vipula hills. It is said that one day King Bimbisara, who had gone for a bath in the Tapoda (the Sarasvati, the chief hot spring) was delayed, and when returning to the town found this gate closed. He, therefore, passed the night with the Buddha in the nearby Venuvana monastery.

7. Maniyar Math

About 1 Km. from the north gate, to the right of the road, is a cylindrical brick-structure. It appears to be the site of an ancient monastery located between Rajgir and Bodh Gaya. Excavations have revealed successive shrines and structures.

8. Swarna-Bhandar Cave

Towards the north-west of the Maniyar Math stands the Swarna Bhandar Cave. According to legend, this was Bimbisara's treasury.

9. Bimbisara Jail

About 1 Km. from Maniyar Math, to the south of the road, is an area, about 60 metres square, enclosed by a stone wall, about 2 metres thick. This has been identified with the prison in which Bimbisara was kept captive by his son Ajatasatru. It is said that from his prison Bimbisara was able to see the Buddha on the Gridhrakuta.

10. Jivaka's mango-garden

The probable sites of the mango-garden of Jivaka and the Mardakukshi monastery can be seen while going to the Gridhrakuta hill. Jivaka was the most famous physician of his day and was attached to the royal court of Bimbisara and

Ajatasatru. He presented his extensive mango-garden (Amravana) to the Buddha and built therein a monastery.

The Mardakukshi monastery was situated close to the foot of Gridhrakuta. When wounded by a splinter of the great rock hurled at Him by Devadatta, Buddha was first brought here on a stretcher, before he could be removed to Jivaka's monastery.

11. Bimbisara Road

This road has an interesting history behind it. Hiuen-Tsang tells us that when Bimbisara was about to visit Buddha on the Mount of Gridhrakuta, he collected a number of men to accompany him; 'they levelled the valleys and spanned the precipices, and with the stones made a staircase about 10 paces wide and 5 li to 6 li long. This road, which Hiuen-Tsang traversed, still exists, and still affords the most convenient footway in approaching Gridhrakuta.

Proceeding up this road, one comes across two brick Stupas, the first about 73 metres from the base and the second further up where the road turns to the north. Both these Stupas were noticed by Hiuen-Tsang who says that the first is a commemorative spot where Bimbisara got down from his chariot and the second where the King sent back the crowd that was accompanying him.

12. Gridhrakuta (Vulture Peak)

The Gridhrakuta Hill was the favourite resort of the Buddha and the scene of many of His important sermons. Atop the Gridhrakuta Hill there are two natural caves with steps approaching them, which, in all probability, represent the 'caves' mentioned by Hiuen-Tsang. Inside one of the caves were found a number of terracotta plagues with the seven Past Buddhas and Maitreya, the Future Buddha, seated in two rows and the Buddhist creed inscribed below each figure in immute characters.

13. Vishwa Shanti Stupa

The Gridhrakuta or the vulture peak of Rajgir is especially considered sacred by the Mahayana Buddhists as the Buddha is believed to have delivered here the Saddharma-Pundarika

(the Lotus Sutra), a few years before attaining Mahaparinirvana.

The Lotus Sutra mentions that when the Buddha spoke on the Vulture Peak, "a wonderous Stupa, adorned with precious jewels and fragrant with sandalwood, sprang up from the earth and hung in the sky before the Buddha." According to St. Nichiren who was born in Japan in A.D. 1222: "Wherever Namu-Myho-Renge-Kyo' (I devote myself to the Sutra of the Lotus of the wonderful law), is chanted, there is a precious Stupa, and where a precious Stupa is built, there is the Buddha."

In modern times, the venerable Nichidassu Fuji the founder of the Japan Buddha Sangha, has built a number of stupas in Japan, India, Sri Lanka and England. One of the important Stupas built by Fuji Guruji is atop the Ratnagiri hill adjacent to the Gridhrakuta or Vulture Peak at Rajgir. The Vishwa Shanti Stupa (World Peace Pagoda), the foundation stone of which was laid in March, 1965, was opened on 25 October 1969. Artistically designed by Prof. Minoru Ohoka of Japan and the noted Indian artist, Upendra Maharathi, the 160 feet high, gold-topped pagoda, is almost double the dimensions of th Sanchi Stupa. In the top chamber of this Stupa, the sacred relics of Lord Buddha, presented by India to Japan in 1952, have also been enshrined.

For going to the top of the 11000 feet high hill, the Stupa is erected; the Japanese have installed an aerial rope-way chairlift chains. This Stupa is now the greatest attraction for the pilgrims as well as tourists visiting Rajgir.

14. Veluvana Vihara

The Buddha Sangha of Japan have also constructed at Rajgir a magnificent Vihara, a model of the Venuvana Vihara where the Buddha had often stayed, while at Rajgir. Built in an area of 32,400 sq. ft., Veluvana is the biggest Vihara in modern India. The inaugural ceremony of the Veluvana Vihara was performed on 24 October 1981.

15. Burmese Temple

The modern Rajgir has also a Burmese Buddhist Temple. This was established by Ven. U. Zayanta in 1958.

9

Nalanda

In pre-Buddhist India, education had two basic features. Firstly, it was restricted to the upper strata of society and secondly it was essentially based on an individual teacher with his small group of pupils, i.e., the Gurugriha (The Teacher's House) system. The Buddhists revolutionised both these concepts. They made the learning open to all and also introduced the system of organised schools in the monasteries. These monastic institutions later gave birth to well-known Buddhist Universities. Of all the Buddhist Universities, Nalanda was the first and the grandest University in India. The glory of Nalanda faded away in A.D. 12th century but its legacy lives.

A. HISTORY

Nalanda was in the Buddha's time, a lovely resort of saints and ascetics. Lord Buddha visited Nalanda several times and delivered some important sermons. Moreover, Sariputta as well as Moggallana, the two chief disciples of the Buddha, were born somewhere near Nalanda. Sariputta also attained Parinirbbana in the house of his parents at Nalanda.

Though Asoka the Great had built a monastery at Nalanda in the third century B.C. yet it emerged as a University much later. While Nagarjuna's name is associated with the Nalanda University since its start in A.D. second century, Arya Deva, it seems, gave it a definite shape in A.D. 4th century.

Under the Guptas and the later monarchs of Magadha, Nalanda, as an educational centre, attained to a magnificent status. The earliest evidence of the history of the revival of Nalanda belonged to the reign of Kumaragupta I. In A.D. 5th century Narasimha Gupta of the Gupta Dynasty built a brick temple more than 300 ft. high at Nalanda which was remarkable for the delicacy of its decoration. By the seventh century, when Hiuen-Tsang came, Nalanda University was in a flourishing state.

The Nalanda University became famous on account of its galaxy of well-versed professors and the high standard of teaching. The Nalanda University counted on its staff such great thinkers as Nagarjuna, Aryadeva, Vasubandhu, Asanga, Sthiramati Dharmapala, Silabhadra, Santideva, Padmasambhava. Being a post-graduate institution, here only advanced students were admitted, those seeking admission being required to satisfy the test prescribed by the 'Dwar-Pandit', i.e., the gatekeeper of the Board of Admission. Hiuen-Tsang records that "the entrance examination was severe and only about two or three out of every ten applicants succeeded in passing it". Hiuen-Tsang himself spent many years at the Nalanda University. He took the degree of the Master of Law there and finally became Vice-Principal of the University.

With endowments from successive monarchs, the Nalanda University became a site of imposing buildings. There were said to be eight colleges, built by different patrons including the one by the king of Srivijaya (Sumatra), who had diplomatic relations with the king of Pala dynasty of Bihar and Bengal. Hiuen-Tsang, states: "The whole establishment is surrounded by a brick wall. One gate opens into the great college from which are separated eight other halls standing in the middle. The richly adorned towers and fairy-like turrets like pointed hill-tops are congregated together . . . ." Another Chinese scholar-pilgrim, It-Sing, who visited the place a few years after Hiuen-Tsang, mentions "300 big rooms and eight halls". Besides these teaching and meeting halls and rooms, "a whole

area of the campus (of Nalanda) was, according to the Tibetan writers, set apart for the libraries and the area in which the University with its grand library was located was called Dharmaganja or Piety Mart. It consisted of three grand buildings called Ratnasagara, Ratnadadhi and Ratnaranjaka respectively. In the Ratnadadhi which was a nine-storeyed building, the sacred scripts were kept". There were on the campus, besides the great structures, ponds with lotuses, well devised footpaths, extensive pleasant lawns, mango groves and lovely flower beds. Moreover, there were innumerable shrines embellished with a wealth of sculptural art.

At the time of Hiuen-Tsang's visit, there were some ten thousand students from Tibet, China, Mongolia, Turkestan and Korea, as well as from different parts of India and Greater India, in fact from the entire Buddhist world. Hiuen-Tsang says, "The Sangharamas of India are counted by myriads, but this is the most remarkable for grandeur and height. The priests, belonging to the convent, or strangers (residing therein) always reach to the number of 10,000 who all study the Great Vehicle, and also (the works belonging to) the eighteen sects, and not only so, but even ordinary works, such as the Vedas and other books, the Hetuvidya (logic), Sabdavidya (grammar), the Chikitsavidya (medicine), the Sankyha; besides these they thoroughly investigate the 'miscellaneous' works. The priests, dwelling here, are, as a body, naturally dignified and grave, so that during the 700 years since the foundation of the establishment, there has been no single case of guilty rebellion against the rules."

The University of Nalanda, continued to grow and remained the greatest seat of learning for over 700 years. Even in the 12th century, it had several thousand students from India and abroad.

How glorious the University was in its days of prosperity is well described in one of its own dedicatory inscription of the eighth century: "Nalanda has scholars well known for their knowledge of sacred texts. It has a row of viharas the spires of which touch the clouds. That (the row of Viharas) seems to have been built by the Creator himself like a garland hanging up high. It has temples which are brilliant with the network of rays from various jewels set in them. It is the

pleasant abode of a learned and virtuous Sangha and resembles-Sumeru, the charming residence of the noble Vidyadharas."

The fatal invasion by Bakhtiar Khilji destroyed the two-sister-universities of Nalanda and Vikramasila, towards the close of the 12th century. It seems the tough and thoughtless invader mistakenly took these universities to be important military centres, with thousands of head-shaven soldiers in orange-uniform. "Most of the monks were killed and the library was set on fire. The soldiers used the books as fuel for cooking. It took six months to burn. Even after such a big fire many books were left. Many scholars fled with these books and thus many of them were saved." Many of these books reached Tibet and Nepal, wherefrom some are still available.

A Tibetan pilgrim popularly known as "Dharmaswami", who visited Nalanda in A.D. 1234 says, "Though he could not procure any text . . . he got another precious jewel in the form of . . . the well-known erudite and the last abbot Rahul Shreebhadra (aged 90) . . . with only seventy followers left (others having left the place or been killed by the invader) . . . Dharmaswami took the old infirm abbot on his shoulders . . . (to a place of safety, thus saving) his most revered guru." Obviously, even after the massive destruction of the Nalanda University, it continued for some time more in a diminutive form. However, by mid-thirteenth century it was abandoned and it fell into ruins.

For centuries Nalanda lay in ruins unknown, unidentified. When Buchanan Hamilton visited the ruins at the village of Bargaon in 1811-1812 he found heaps of images in the ruins and thought that a place of worship might have existed there. He was told by the villagers that "vast heaps of materials had for ages been removed to Behar and other neighbouring places for building." This process continued for more than 50 years after the visit of Buchanan. Then came Sir Alexander Cunningham, the first Director General of Archaeology and the pioneer explorer of Buddhist heritage in India. On the basis of the accounts of the Chinese pilgrims, Huien-Tsang in particular, he identified the modern village of Bargaon with the historic Nalanda. He also discovered on the site two

inscriptions in which "the place itself is called Nalanda". Cunningham published his findings in the "Ancient Geography of India", in 1871 and thus put Nalanda once again on the map.

Systematic excavation work at Nalanda was started by the Archaeological Survey of India in 1915: this "unearthed the wonderful monuments which have won the admiration of the whole world." The remains bear witness to the spacious grandeur of a by-gone age, when wealth and learning must have combined to maintain the great Institutions.

B. OBJECTS OF INTEREST

The ruins of Nalanda, only 12 Km. from Rajgir, extend over a vast area. Lengthwise they extend from south to north, with the monasteries on the eastern flank and the temples of the western. The monasteries were all built in more or less the same plan in each case, with rows of cells preceded by a corridor round a central courtyard and shrine at the back wall, just opposite the entrance.

The Stupa site No. 3 is a huge structure standing in the middle of a court on the south-western flank surrounded by a number of Stupas. To the north of this Stupa and in the same alignment are ruins of the temples erected directly over the ruins of earlier ones.

As says Dr. R.L. Soni: "At Nalanda are still discernible the glorious glimpses of the fascinating halo that once was of the atmosphere here. Every pebble, every stone or brick lying scattered, even every grain of dust, around the sacred precincts, has a vital story to tell of the legendary glory as the background of this place. This awakens our consciousness with a lightning throb in our heart, bringing to vivid awareness the human dignity, the intellectual brilliance, moral grandeur and spiritual radiance that once pervaded the entire scene of this mighty centre of learning".

The Museum

The antiquities discovered from the vast ruins are preserved in the Archaeological Museum at Nalanda. Among other things it is interesting to observe the ancient seals of the Nalanda Mahavihara, specimens of burnt rice (9th and 10th

centuries), bronze images of the Buddha, some with umbrella overhead, images of the Mahayana and Hindu deities and of the ten incarnations of Vishnu.

Nava Nalanda Mahavihara

In modern times, Bhikkhu Jagdish Kashyap, who hailed from Magadha, was responsible for reviving the glory of ancient Nalanda. When in 1949, he began organising the Institute of Pali, Nalanda was a desolate place. So he started the work first at Rajgir and it was only later that he moved to Nalanda. This Institute developed into the present Nava Nalanda Mahavihara. "He collected money locally and bought land and built small hutments to house the first staff and students, as well as a house which included his living place, a chaitya, and a meditation chamber in the basement, and a guest room. All this he made out of his own resources and donated to the Institute. He did much of the organizational and teaching work himself. It was all labour of love, a mission of life for him. Finally, he succeeded in persuading the Muslim landlord of Islampur who owned the land near the ruins of the old Nalanda University to donate sufficient land for the new building of the Nava Nalanda Mahavihara for housing the Institute."

The foundation stone of the Nalanda Pali Post Graduate Research Institute was laid by Dr. Rajindra Prasad, the first President of India, on 20 November 1951 and the inauguration ceremony took place on 20 March 1956 under Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, the then Vice-President of India. The Institute, now also known as 'Nava Nalanda Mahavihara', had the Ven. Bhikkhu J. Kashyap as its first Director.

By now, the Nava Nalanda Mahavihara has become an important seat of Buddhist learning and is a worthy successor to the ancient University of Nalanda.

10

Sanchi

Sanchi, about 10 kilometre south-west of Vidisha on the Central Railway and 70 kilometre from Bhopal, the capital of Madhya Pradesh, is one of the most sacred Buddhist shrines in India.

The term Stupa (Pali: Thupa) means a heap or mound. In Buddhism, the term is generally applied to monuments over the relics of the Buddha and His disciples and other distinguished persons. The Stupas are of three kinds: *Sarirka* Stupas raised over body relics; *Uddesika* Stupas built as commemorative monuments; and *Paribhogika* Stupas erected over the articles, like the bowl, the sanghati etc. used by Lord Buddha. The earliest and the grandest Stupa which survives till today, is the Great Sanchi which was initially built by Asoka.

A. HISTORY

Sanchi appears to have been chosen by Asoka for constructing a Stupa because of his happy association with Vidisa, the birth place of Devi, his consort, who was the daughter of a local Buddhist merchant. The original Stupa was about 60 feet in diametre at the base, approximately hemisphere in shape with a raised terrace surrounding its base and a crowning pinnacle. Mahendra, Asoka's son is said to

have embarked on his mission to Sri Lanka after worshipping at the Sanchi shrine atop the Chetiya Giri hills.

The Asokan Stupa was extensively damaged by the opponents of Buddhism following the break-up of the Mauryan Empire in 185 B.C. However, it was soon rebuilt by the devout Buddhists of Vidisa, and others in the country. While reconstructing, its scope was enlarged to nearly twice its previous size.

The elaborately carved four gateways (torana) were added by the devotees in the first century B.C. As the inscriptions reveal, top architrate of the South Gateway was the gift of one Ananda, who was the foreman of the artisans of King Satakarni, a former member of the Satavahana dynasty. The south pillar of the West Gateway and the middle architrate of the South Gateway were the gifts of the same person, one Balamitra, the pupil of Aya-Chuda. Nagapiya, a native of Kurara, was the donor of both south pillar of the East Gateway and north pillar of the West Gateway.

The last addition made to the Great Stupa was in about A.D. 450 when four images of the Buddha, each seated under a pillarded canopy were installed against the walls of the Stupa facing the four entrances. Around the Great Stupa, grew a grand complex of Stupas, temples, pillars and monasteries covering a period of about 1500 years from the 3rd century B.C. to A.D. 12th century.

From 13th century onward, the Sanchi shrines fell on bad days and were deserted by the Buddhists. In due course, they were engulfed by jungle and completely forgotten till they were discovered by General Taylor in 1818, who found Stupa 1, 2 and 3 intact. In the following years, however, these monuments were damaged to a large extent by the archaeologists and treature-hunters. In 1822, the Great Stupa was opened up by the Assistant Political Agent in Bhopal, from top to bottom on one side, thus leaving a great breach which led to the collapse of the West Gateway and a part of the enclosing balustrade. The excavations by Cunningham and F.C. Maisey in 1851 also damaged the Stupas. Meanwhile, the Asokan pillar was broken into pieces by a local Zamindar.

An effort to repair and restore the Great Stupa was made

by Major Cole in 1881 who succeeded in filling in the breach in the dome of the Stupa and setting up its fallen West and South Gateways and a part of its railing. However, the major part of the exploration and restoration work was done by Sir John Marshal, Director General of Archaeology in India who, between the years 1912 to 1919 undertook large scale exploration, restoration and reconstruction work, and also consecutively numbered the incomparable monuments.

Besides the Great Stupa on the plateau, there are as many as fifty Stupas, pillars, temples and monasteries. Stupa 2 and monastery 51 are on the western slope on a ledge of the rock lower than the Main Terrace.

B. OBJECTS OF INTEREST

1. Great Stupa

The diametre of the Great Stupa, as it stands today, is about 120 feet and its height, excluding the railing and umbrella, is about 50 feet. It consists of an almost hemispherical dome, truncated near the top and crowned by a triple umbrella set at the centre of a heavy masonry pedestal, within a square railing. A high circular battered terrace approached by a double stairway on the south and meant for circumambulation is built against the base. At the ground level, the balustrade made of stone encloses the dome and the terrace; it has access from the cardinal directions through four gateways.

In the bas-reliefs on the gateway of the Sanchi Stupa, scenes from the life of the Buddha find a prominent place. Here the Buddha is not represented in human form; only certain symbols such as horse without a rider but with an umbrella held above, throne, wheel, foot-prints, trees commemorating His presence. On the summit of the gateway stands the emblem of Buddhism, viz., the wheel of Law (dharma-chakra), supported on elephants flanked on either side by a guardian yaksha and at the end by Tri-ratna—the trinity of Buddhism—the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha.

Based on the identification and description as given by Mrs. Debala Mitra in the pamphlet 'Sanchi' published by the Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi, 1978, we briefly

list below the bas-reliefs which can broadly be classified into five groups:

I. Scenes from the life of the Buddha

There is no direct representation of Buddha's birth at Lumbini. However, the recurring lotus plant, either alone or with a female figure, seated or standing, often being bathed by elephants, is recognised as representing birth. Enlightenment at Bodh Gaya is represented by a throne beneath the Bodhi tree (pipal-tree or Ficus religiosa). This theme occurs several times. First Sermon or Dharma-chakra-pravartana at Sarnath is represented by a wheel. It is either placed on throne or on a pillar. Maha-pari-nirvana of the Buddha at Kusinara is depicted by a stupa.

Besides the four great events of Buddha's life, 25 more scenes can be easily identified. These are

1. *Maya's dream*—East Gateway, north pillar, south face, second panel.
2. *Four Drives* or four ominous sights of an old man, a sick man, a corpse and an ascetic—North Gateway, west pillar, front side, second panel.
3. *Great Departure* or Renunciation—South Gateway, rear side, top architrave; East Gateway, front side, middle architrave.
4. Worship of hair-lock of the Buddha by the Gods: South Gateway, West pillar, third panel.
5. Sujata's offering of milk rice: North Gateway, rear side, middle architrave.
6. Svastika's offering of grass for making His seat under the Bodhi Tree: South Gateway, east pillar (in the Museum).
7. Temptation and assault of Mara: North Gateway, rear side, middle architrave; West Gateway, rear side, bottom architrave.
8. Buddha's Chankama—after Enlightenment, the Buddha spent the third week in walking to and fro: South Gateway, east pillar (in the Museum); East gateway, south pillar, front side, top panel.
9. Jewel house—where the Buddha passed the fourth week thinking out the abhidharma; South Gateway, east pillar (in the Museum).

10. Muchilinda—where Buddha was protected from the rains by the Naga King Muchilinda; South Gateway, east pillar (in the Museum).

11. Tapusha and Bhallika—on the last day of His seven weeks, Buddha was offered food by these two merchants who happened to pass that way; South Gateway, east pillar (in the Museum).

12. Presentation of bowls—by the four guardian deities for taking the food offered by Tapusha and Bhallika—South Gateway, east pillar (in the Museum).

13. Adhyeshana—the Gods led by Brahma exhort Buddha to preach His Doctrine for the benefit of men; East Gateway, north pillar, south face, top panel; West Gateway, south pillar, front side, second panel.

14. Miracle of the serpent—Buddha's victory over a serpent in a fire-temple at Uruvela: East Gateway, south pillar, north face.

15. Miracle of wood and fire—after Buddha's victory over the serpent, a sacrifice was arranged but without Buddha's permission wood could not be split, nor fire lit: East Gateway, south pillar, north face, third panel.

16. Buddha's walking on the river at Uruvela: East gateway, south pillar, front side, third panel.

17. Buddha's visit to Kapilavastu: North Gateway, west pillar, east face; East Gateway, south pillar, third panel.

18. Buddha's preaching to the Sakyas: North Gateway, west pillar, third panel; West Gateway, south pillar, north face, second panel.

19. Buddha's residence at Jetavana—built by Anathapinkika, a wealthy merchant of Sravasti: North Gateway, east pillar, front side, second panel.

20. Miracle of Sravasti: Buddha performed a number of miraculous feats, including creation of a road in the air which he used for ascending: North Gateway, front side, third panel.

21. Buddha's preaching under the mango-tree at Sravasti: North gateway, east pillar, front side, first panel.

22. Miracle of Sankasya—Buddha went to the heaven to preach the abhidharma to His mother. After three months He descended by a staircase at Sankasya: North gateway, west pillar, front side, top panel.

23. Offering of honey by a monkey to the Buddha at Vaisali: North Gateway, west pillar, east face, second panel.

24. Sakra's visit—to the Buddha at the Indra-saila cave near Rajagriha North Gateway, east pillar, west face, top panel.

25. Royal processions—King Prasenjit of Sravasti coming out of the city to meet the Buddha: North Gateway, east pillar, front side, fourth panel.

II. The Jatakas

There are only five representations of the Jatakas on the gateways of Sanchi Stupa but they have been treated in great detail. These are:

1. The Mahakapi Jataka (no. 407): West Gateway, south pillar, front side, top panel.
2. The Chhaddanta Jataka (no. 514): South Gateway, rear side, middle architrave; West Gateway, front side, bottom architrave; North Gateway, rear side, top architrave.
3. The Alambusa Jataka (no. 523): North Gateway, front side, bottom architrave.
4. The Sama Jataka (no. 540): West Gateway, north pillar, south face, top panel.
5. The Vassantara Jataka (no. 547): North Gateway, front and rear sides of bottom architrave.

III. Historical events

Three events in the subsequent history of Buddhism portrayed on the Sanchi gateways are:

1. *Division of Relics*: South Gateway, rear side, bottom architrave; West Gateway, rear side, top and middle architraves. After the Mahaparinirvana of the Buddha, there arose a dispute about the bone-relics of the Blessed One. There were eight claimants, viz., the Mallas of Kushinagara, Ajatasatru of Rajagriha, the Sakyas of Kapilavastu, the Bulis of Allakappa, the Koliyas of Ramagrama, the Mallas of Pava, the Lichchhavis of Vaisali and a resident of Vethadvipa. Ultimately, the relics were shared equally by the eight claimants who later erected stupas over them in their respective places. Actual flight which is not recorded in the Mahaparinibbana sutta is shown on the South Gateway.

2. *Stupa of Ramagrama*—South Gateway, front side middle architrave. Of the eight original stupas, Asoka is said to have opened up seven with the intention of enshrining the relics in the innumerable stupas erected by himself. He failed to secure relics from the stupa of Ramagrama as it was zealously guarded by the nagas. To the right of the stupa is Asoka with his retinue, and to the left are the nagas with their families.

3. *Asoka's visit to the Bodhi Tree*—(East Gateway, front side, bottom architrave). Asoka's visit to the Sambodhi is known from his inscription. The representation at Sanchi shows the branches of the Bodhi-Tree rising above a barrel-vaulted temple enshrining triratna, and Asoka supported by two queens. On the East Gateway, there is a circular pillard structure with open sides enclosing the Bodhi Tree with Vajrasana at its base. Asoka is seen twice here. Once descending from his elephant and the second time proceeding towards the structure with clasped hands.

IV. The Manushi Buddhas

(North Gateway, front side, bottom architrave; East Gateway, rear side, top architrave) "The symbolic representations of the six Manushi Buddhas (Previous Buddhas) find a prominent place on the Sanchi Gateways. The representations take the form of either stupas or Bodhi-trees which are different in each case. Thus, Vipasyin, Sikhin, Visvabhu, Krakuchchhanda, Kanakamuni and Kasyapa are respectively indicated by the patali, pundarika, sala, sirisha, udumbara and nyagrodha. On the West Gateway, along with this group, the Bodhi-tree (Nagapushpa) of Maitreya, the Future Buddha, is also shown.

V. Miscellaneous Scenes and Decorations

Miscellaneous scenes include several relics: worship of the Buddha as symbolized by the empty throne or stupa not only by human and celestial beings but also by the animal world: glimpses of heavenly life: scenes entirely of a mundane character, depicting men and women given to pleasures and sports. Animals, with or without riders, dominate a number of decorative panels. Lastly, there are rich and exquisite floral motifs, treated with great delicacy and ingenuity. Noteworthy being the creeper of life, which often effectively combines isolated beings like birds, beasts and men with one continuous stream of life.

Stupa 2. While the greatness of Stupa I is on account of the marvellous sculpture on the gateways, the stupas 2 and 3 are important because of the body relics of some distinguished disciples of the Buddha discovered therein. According to the inscriptions on the four relic-caskets discovered from stupa 2, the bone-relics enshrined therein were of 10 saints, namely, 1. Kasapagota, 2. Majhima, 3. Haritiputa, 4. Vachhiya Suvijayata, 5. Mahavanaya, 6. Apagira, 7. Kodiniputa, 8. Kosikiputa, 9. Gotiputa and 10. Mogaliputa. These teachers lived in the third century B.C. Of them, Kasapagota and Majhima were sent by Asoka, after the third Buddhist Council, to preach Dhamma in the Himavat (Himalayan) region.

Stupa 3. Stupa 3, situated just near the Great Stupa, yielded the relics of Sariputta and Maha-Moggallana, the two chief disciples of the Buddha. The excavations in 1851 revealed a stone slab about five feet long lying from north to south. Beneath it were found two large boxes of grey sand stone, each with a short inscription in Brahmi Characters on its lid. The box to the south bore the inscription Sariputasa and that to the north was inscribed Maha Moggalanasa. Sariputta's box contained a white steatite relic-casket covered by a thin earthen saucer of lustrous black along with two pieces of sandalwood. Inside the Casket were found a small fragment of bone and seven various beads of pearl, garnet, lapis lazuli, crystal and amethyst. On the inner surface of the lid was written in ink the letter say the initial of Sariputta. In Maha Moggallana's box was found another casket, somewhat smaller, containing two small fragments of bone. The lid was initialled in ink with the letter ma.

Besides the Great Stupa on the plateau, there are as many as forty-eight stupas, pillars, temples and monasteries. Stupa 2 and monastery 51 are on the western slope on the ledge of a rock about 320 metres lower than the Main Terrace.

The Museum

There is a small archaeological Museum at the foot of the

hill displaying some loose antiquities found during the excavation and restoration operations at Sanchi.

5. New Chetiyagiri Vihara

The beautiful New Chetiyagiri Vihara, which is perched on the extremity of the northern facade of the Chetiya Giri Hills, built by the Maha Bodhi Society of India was opened in November 1952 when in the presence of the Prime Minister of India (Jawaharlal Nehru) and Prime Minister of Burma (U Nu), the sacred relics of the two great disciples of the Buddha—Sariputta and Maha Moggallana—were enshrined in it. These relics, which were discovered by Cunningham in 1851, and taken to London, were returned to India in January 1949 on the request of the Maha Bodhi Society of India.

The body relics of ten Buddhist saints, which were recovered from Stupa 2 and kept in the British Museum, London, were given back to India in 1956. Of these, the first casket containing relics of Mogaliputa Tissa, Kosikiputa and Gotiputa Arahats were presented by the Government of India to the Government of Sri Lanka. The relics of the other saints were presented to the Maha Bodhi Society of India, and were enshrined in the New Chetiyagiri Vihara.

Other Stupas

Sanchi, and the region around it can be truly called the sacred land of relics. Besides the relics found in stupas 2 and 3, relics have been discovered from a large number of stupas scattered in this region. For instance, at Sonari, 5 km from Sanchi, there is a group of eight stupas, and in one of them (in a square courtyard) numerous relics were found. At Satdhara, 10 km. west of Sanchi, there are two stupas, the smaller of which yielded relics of Sariputta and Maha Moggallana, such as those found at Sanchi. At Bhojpur 12 km. from Sanchi and at Andher 8 km. farther, there are groups of stupas, some of them contained important relics.

Bharhut

Another great stupa in Madhya Pradesh was built at Bharhut in the third century B.C. In those days, Bharhut was a flourishing city on the main highway between Ujjain and

Bhilsa in Central India as well as Pataliputra (Patna) in Bihar, and Kosambi and Sravasti in Uttar Pradesh. The ancient city is now represented by the village of Bharhut which is 15 km. south of the Satna Railway Station on Central Railway in Madhya Pradesh. Bharhut is 450 km. from Sanchi.

According to Sir Alexander Cunningham, to whom we owe the discovery and salvage in 1873-1874 of whatever little had escaped the destruction and spoilation of the rich heritage of Bharhut, the Great Stupa was by and large the result of the 'danam' or 'gift' of the ordinary Buddhists. Cunningham has listed as many as 208 inscriptions on the coping stones, pillars and railings of the Stupa. Of these, barring the two royal inscriptions, all are by the pious Buddhists: monks, nuns and the lay folk.

After Buddhism declined in India, the Bharhut Stupa fell into disuse and was later on pulled down by the ignorant people merely for the sake of bricks required for their houses. It may look strange yet it is a fact, as says Cunningham, that "the present village of Bharhut which contains upwards of 200 houses, is built entirely of the bricks taken from the Stupa."

The sculptured scenes of the Bharhut Stupa, which have withstood the ravages of time, weather and man, have brought to light the finest examples of early Indian Sculpture. The subjects covered by the pioneer Buddhist artists are varied and vast in number. The illustrations include 24 Jatakas, 7 historical scenes, 27 miscellaneous scenes, 6 humorous scenes and a host of objects of worship.

In the Bharhut sculptures, the Buddha is represented by symbols only and not in human form. Such symbols are: Wheel (Dharma Chakra), Bodhi Tree, and Footprints (Buddha-padas).

The most important historical events associated with the life of Gautama the Buddha sculptured at Bharhut are:

1. The dream of Maha Maya;
2. Buddha's visit to the Tushita Heaven;
3. The gift of Jetavana Monastery;
4. Visit of Prasenjit; and
5. Visit of Ajatasatru.

Majority of the Bharhut sculptures are now in the Indian Museum, Calcutta.

11

Amaravati

Of all the Buddhist shrines in ancient Andhra, the Maha-Chaitya at Amaravati, 32 Km. from Guntur, on the bank of the river Krishna, was the most sacred as well as the most magnificent.

A. HISTORY

The Amaravati Stupa was first built in the third century B.C. by a missionary monk, Mahadeva, sent by Asoka to preach Buddhism in this part of the country. Initially it was a modest stupa enclosed by a granite railing. A fragment of a polished pillar bearing an Asokan edict discovered here confirms its erection during the reign of Asoka. In the following two or three centuries, the granite rail was replaced by the limestone one and the gateways were also renovated. A large number of inscribed sculptured fragments of this period include a limestone stele of the second century B.C. depicting scenes of Vaisali, Sravasti and Kusinagara with appropriate labels.

The Satavahanas who ruled Andhra, after Asoka, for a long period of over 450 years, though not Buddhists. were sympathetic towards the Buddhist cause. During the reign of the later Satavahana Kings, who made the nearby

Dhanyakataka their royal seat, the Amaravati stupa was enlarged in A.D. second century and also surrounded by a new highly ornamental railing, carved with beautiful reliefs and elegant designs.

Of the three inscriptions of the later Satavahana period, the earliest one refers to the gift of the Wheel of Law (Dharma-Chakra) at the western gate of the Maha-Chaitya during the reign of Vasishthiputra Palumavi (A.D. 130-A.D. 159). The second one refers to the replacement or renovation of a part of the railing during the reign of Siri Sivamaka Sada, generally identified with Siva-Sri (A.D. 159-A.D. 166). The third inscription belongs to the period of Gautamiputra Yajna Satakarni (A.D. 166-A.D. 196), the last important King of the Satavahana dynasty. Yajna Satakarni was the patron and friend of Acharya Nagarjuna, the famous Buddhist saint and scholar. Taranatha, the Tibetan historian, says that the erection of the sculptured rail at Amaravati was organised by Nagarjuna. According to an inscription, renovation of the railing was supervised by a monk, named Buddharakshita. Apparently, this was at the instance of Acharya Nagarjuna. The donors included, a nun, who was Buddharakshita's disciple, Lakkhita, a monk from Pataliputra; three Tamil pilgrims; the people of Dhanyakataka; and a family from Ghantasala in Andhra.

Hiuen-Tsang who visited Dhanyakataka (Amaravati) in A.D. 639 says, "The convents (sangharamas) are numerous, but are mostly deserted and ruined; of those preserved there are about 20 with 1000 or so priests. They all study the law of the Great Vehicle."

The Amaravati Maha-Chaitya appears to have continued to be a living shrine for a long time. An eleventh century inscription records that a Pallava, Simhavarman worshipped the stupa. Inscriptions in the nearby Amresvara temple of the Kota chief, who ruled in 12th century-13th century from Dharnikota (Dhanyakataka) also refer to some donations to the Maha-Chaitya. One of these inscriptions dated to A.D. 1182 describes the Maha-Chaitya as a very lofty stupa, finely decorated with sculptures. Lastly, Dharmakirti, a pilgrim from Sri Lanka, visited Amaravati and carried out some repairs to the shrine in A.D. 1344. An inscription to this

effect has been found at Gadaladeniya, near Kandy in Sri Lanka. Thus the mighty stupa survived almost intact, with its towering dome, till about the fourteenth century. After this, however, Amaravati Shrine was completely neglected and lost sight of.

The existence of the Amaravati Stupa came to light in 1797 when Collin Mackenzie visited Amaravati and found some men quarrying the remains of the stupa for materials for a new township being built by the Raja of Chintapalli, Raja Vasu Reddi Nayudu, who had shifted his residence a year earlier from Chintapalli to Amaravati. What Mackenzie saw was a "great low mound crowned by a smaller one, some ninety feet in diameter and twenty feet high, and cased with bricks and slabs of stone". Mackenzie thought that the monument was a "mysterious structure" but he had no clear idea of its importance. Hence he did not interfere. Consequently, many priceless sculptures were used in the Amaresvara temple, the Sivaganga tank and other buildings then being constructed while some were burnt for lime. Such vandalism continued for over 20 years till Mackenzie revisited the site in 1818, with a band of assistants and prepared drawings of the site and the stupa. He also recovered a few sculptured pieces.

After Mackenzie, many attempts were made to excavate the site. These were by Sir Walter Smith (1845), by Robert Sewell (1877), by James Burgess (1881) and thrice by Alexander Rea (1888-1889, 1905-1906, and 1908-1909). Inspite of considerable spoilt for over hundred years, the potentiality of the Amaravati ruins was not exhausted. No wonder, the excavations undertaken during the year 1958-1959, by K. Subramanyam and K. Krishna Murthy of the Archaeological Survey of India, yielded a large number of inscribed architectural pieces, sculptured pieces, and other significant antiquities.

B. OBJECTS OF INTEREST

1. The Stupa

The Amaravati mahachaitya in its final shape had "the vestiges of characteristic ayaka—platforms projecting out of the drum at cardinal directions. These platforms carried

originally five ayaka—pillars, representing symbolically the five important events of Buddha's life: 'Birth, Renunciation, Enlightenment, First Sermon and Maha-parinirvana'. Both drum and ayaka—platforms, the latter measuring 7.20×2.10 m, were covered with sculptured slabs. The dome, estimated to have a diameter of 42 m rested over the rim of the drum leaving all round a better of about 7.1 m; its height being about half its diameter. Tall dome-slabs measuring about 2.32 m and carved with tri-ratna and purna-Kumbha, covered the lower part of the dome, above which probably came the decorations in stucco."

The ornamental railing was about 4 m high and measured about 54 m in diameter, pierced on all the four sides by gateways. According to Dr. Barnet: "The railing consisted of about 244 m of coping resting on 136 pillars and 348 Cross-bars." Between the drum of the stupa and the railing was the paved circumambulatory path (pradakshina-patha) having a width of about 4 m.

Nothing remains now of the grandest Amaravati stupa except a small mound which consists of just the drum of the brick-built stupa, the paved circumambulatory path (pradakshina-patha) and the circular alignment of the raiiing represented by a few uprights and pillars. At present, the stupa drum has a height of about 1.55 m and a diameter of 49.30 m.

A model of the Maha-Chaitya, in its most evolved stage, the conjectural restoration of a part of the railing and a few sculptured panels, all in cement, may be seen in the courtyard of the nearby Museum.

2. The Museum

The relief medallions of Amaravati are considered unsurpassed examples of sculptured compositions and could well vie in artistic beauty and grandeur with those of Sanchi and Bharhut.

The wonderful sculptures from the Amaravati Stupa are distributed over several museums; majority of them being in the Government Museum, Madras, the British Museum, London, and the site Museum at Amaravati.

The exhibits in the Amaravati Museum include those left at

the site by Burgess and Rea and those recovered during the excavations during the year 1958-1959. In addition, there are a few antiquities from Gummadidurra and Alluru in District Krishna, and Lingarajapalli in District Visakhapatnam. Chronologically, the site museum collection, mostly in stone, covers a period of 1500 years—from the third century B.C. to A.D. twelfth century.

Some of the important relics in the Amaravati Museum are described below, largely in the words of H. Sarkar and S.P. Nainar, authors of the pamphlet 'Amaravati' published by the Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi 1980.

I. Key-Gallery

The exhibit that first meets the eye in the Key-Gallary is "the lotus—medallion, carved on a cross-bar of a railing belonging to A.D. 2nd century. It is flanked on either side by a dome-slab depicting the Purna-Kumbha or 'ambrosial case with overflowing foliage and flowers'. Purna-Kumbha is an auspicious symbol expressing an idea of fullness and abundance".

"The western wing of the gallery is formed by two drum-slabs, each of them showing the bas-relief of a stupa. The stupa is shown encircled by a four-barred rail-cross-bars and fluted uprights showing lotus-medallions. On either side of the gateway is a seated lion atop an octagonal pillar. The ornate entrance to the pradakshina-patha is marked by a moon-stone carved with a lotus-design having purna-kumbha on either side. The stupa proper shows three out of the four ayaka-platforms, the front one surmounted by five pillars symbolizing five main events of Buddha's life. However, the principal object of worship is a chakra on a throne, flanked by chauri (flywhisk)-bearers and devotees."

On the dome of the same stupa-relief are sculptured at least three Jataka stories. These are the Sibi-Jataka, the Mandhata-Jataka and the Vessantara-Jataka.

The other drum-slab depicts a simple stupa, with three—barred rail and ayaka—pillars. Buddha is here symbolized variously as a flaming pillar (agniskandha), and wheel surmounting a pillar, each one placed on a throne. There are also two representations of Buddha-pada with umbrella on top.

II. Gallery—1

1. The image of Buddha

A life-size standing image of Buddha greets the visitor as soon as he steps into the gallery. With left shoulder and forearm draped in sanghati, his right hand, now missing, was probably in the abhaya, whereas his left hand holds the hem of the robe near his chest. A circular mark on the forehead, a mark of mahapurusha-lakshana (sign of great man) is quite conspicuous. The top-knot and ring-like curls of the short hair, turned to the right (dakshinavartakessa), are suggestive of superhuman wisdom. The image stands gracefully to a height of about 2 m (excluding the pedestal).

2. Drum-slabs

The Drum-slab near the southern wing depicts, in the foreground, the scene of the worship of wheel. On the dome of the stupa-relief are miniature compositions delineating scenes from the life of Gautama Buddha. These reliefs include the scenes of the descent of Bodhisattva in the form of an elephant (Svetaketu), Queen Mayadevi's dream of the elephant entering her womb, the interpretation of the dream by soothsayers, the birth of Siddhartha and the presentation of the baby before nagara-devatas. In a running frieze below, occurs the story of the Mandhatajataka in four panels.

The next drum-slab depicts a stupa encircled by a four-barred railing. Of the carvings, the most prominent is the scene of the workship of the Bodhi-tree, symbolizing Buddha.

3. *Rail-fragments*

Of this group, the most impressive piece is an ornate cross-bar. Both its faces are carved: on the obverse is carved the lotus-medallion while the reverse shows the scene of the presentation of Buddha's son Rahula by Yasodhara. In the scene carved within an outline of lotus-petals, Buddha has been represented symbolically by a throne, his padukas below the throne and a flaming pillar surmounted by the triratna. A crowd of monks, is seen to the left of the throne, while on the right is a group of womem from the royal household. A princely figure is seen presenting Rahula to Buddha. Behind him, in half-turned attitude, stands gracefully Yasodhara

pointing her hand at her son urging him to ask for his inheritance.

III. Gallery—2

1. *Dome-slabs*

One big dome-slab with curved profile stands to a height of 2.32 m and has three main compartments. It has a donative Prakrit inscription at the base. The first scene depicts the worship of Bodhi-tree by two pairs of couples and two flying devas on top. Separated by a row of miniature stupas, the second one portrays the scene of worship of chakra by four male figures, two of which are seated with folded hands and the other two holding the fly-whisk. Two flying devas are also to be seen on either side at the top. The third, separated from the second by a row of lions, shows a stupa with two worshippers and two flying devas.

2. *Carved and inscribed pillars*

Occupying the pride of place in the collection of early sculptures from Amaravati is a limestone stele with labelled bas-reliefs, of the second century B.C.

The reliefs on the southern face contain six scenes pertaining to the last three months of the life of Buddha—from his stay at Vaisali to the parinirvana at Kusinagara. On the left corner occurs the representation of the Bahuputa-Chaitya, a favourite resort of Gautama Buddha. In these scenes Chaitya has been represented as a tree-within-railing. The most prominent of the three trees is worshipped by two devotees, one of them with folded hands and the other holding a child in the out-stretched left hand. It has an inscribed label giving the name Bahuputa-chaitya. To the right of the first scene is a kneeling figure with folded hands before a Buddha-pada. The label calls it Chapala-Chaitya, another favourite resort of Buddha at Vaisali. Over the second scene is a vaulted structure with three pinnacles, and outside a Buddha-pada under an umbrella. The inscription on the vault says 'The Lord dwells in the Kutagara-cottage in Mahavana at Vaisali. It is said that Buddha went from Chapala-Chaitya to Mahavana-Kutagara and from there, while bidding farewell to Vaisali, gazed at the city 'with an elephant's look': the actual

inscription also states nagapalogana. The next scene is represented by a river with a handled bowl; beside it is an oblong seat below a tree. As the story goes, Buddha fell sick on his way to Kusinagara. He sat under a tree and wanted to drink water from the adjoining streamlet. As the water was muddy, Ananda, his disciple, was hesitant but on Buddha's insistence he went to fetch water. To his surprise Ananda saw that the streamlet had begun to flow clear. The river shown in the relief stands for this streamlet where miracle of clear water took place. A fragment of the last scene, the parinirvana at Kusinagara, is only preserved but the lebel says, 'The extinction of the Lord in the sala-grove.'

The second face gives a few scenes from Sravasti including the familar scene of the purchase of Jetavana park by Anathapindika from prince Jeta, all with appropriate lebels. Another scene delineated here relates to Dhanyakataka on the bank of the river Krishna. It is interesting to note that the Krishna has been depicted here as if taking a turn, which is true even today. The part of the ancient city with buildings and chaitya-windows is also shown.

A drum-frieze containing a donative inscription depicts the scenes from Buddha's life. The first scene shows water indicated by wavy lines symbolizing Anotatta lake associated with Maya's conception. Other three represent Bodhi-tree symbolizing Buddha's Enlightenment, worship of Dharma-Chakra (First Sermon), and Stupa with worshippers (Parinirvana).

There is also an inscription on the octagonal pillar which speaks of the installation of a Dharma-Chakra at the eastern side of the Maha-Chaitya at Dhanyakataka for the Purva-sailiya monks. A Telugu inscription of the Twelfth century is engraved on the other side of the Brahmi inscription.

3. *Dr. Ambedkar Statue*

Buddhism is once again gaining ground in Andhra. As a symbol of modern Buddhism there stands, just in front of the site Museum at Amaravati, a life-size statue of Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar who inspired millions of people in modern India to seek solace in the Buddha-Dharma.

Amaravati Sculptures in the Madras Musuem

Outside Amaravati, the largest collection of Amaravati sculptures is in the Government Museum, Madras. There are as many as 72 sculptures depicting scenes from Buddha's life, and 27 scenes depicting Jatakas—past lives of the Buddha in the Madras Museum. These sculptures cover a period of over 450 years from about 200 B.C. to A.D. 250. As many as one hundred and twenty-five inscriptions on these sculptures speak volumes of the missionary spirit of the early Buddhists. The donars are from all walks of life and from many regions of the country. They included mendicants, worthy men, lay worshippers, disciples, preachers of the law, supervisors of renovation works, householders, housewives, generals, perfumers, leather workers and many others.

12

Nagarjunakonda

Nagarjunakonda, like Amaravati, is also situated on the bank of river Krishna in District Guntur of Andhra Pradesh.

A. HISTORY

Traditionally, Nagarjunakonda is associated with Acharya Nagarjuna, the renowned founder of the Madhyamika (Sunyavada) School of Buddhist philosophy. According to an ancient Tibetan tradition, Nagarjuna, towards the evening of his life, lived at Nagarjunakonda and was interred there. Hiuen Tsang gives an interesting description of the monastery said to have been built by the Satavahana King Gautamiputra Yajna Satakarni (A.D. 166-A.D. 196) for Nagarjuna at Sriparavate, now known as Nagarjunakonda.

The valley of Nagarjunakonda became a flourishing Buddhist centre in A.D. third century largely due to the patronage of the Ikshvaku Kings and Queens. The Ikshvakus claimed their descent from the mythological Ikshvakus of Ayodhya. Chamtasri, sister of the founder of this royal house, Vasishthiputra Siri Chamtamula, was an ardent devotee of the Buddha. This pious lady and other Ikshvaku Princesses were, therefore, the main benefactories of the Buddhist shrines in and around Vijayapuri, the Ikshvaku capital.

The second Ikshvaku King, Virapurushadatta, is said to have embraced Buddhism. His son and successor, Ehuvala or Chamtamula II, was also a Buddhist. Like his father, he ruled for 24 years. His reign marked the golden period of Nagarjunakonda as it was during this period that construction of Buddhist shrines reached its peak. The construction of Buddhist shrines at Nagarjunakonda came to an end in the eleventh regnal year of Rudrapurusha-datta, the last known Ikshvaku King.

More than thirty Buddhist shrines came up in the Nagarjunakonda valley during the Ikshvaku rule. It was the largest and the most important settlement in South India in A.D. third century.

The fame of Nagarjunakonda attracted Buddhist saints and scholars from all parts of India and even foreign lands, such as Sri Lanka, China etc. Both the Theravada and Mahayana traditions of Buddhism flourished side by side at Nagarjunakonda. Inscriptions have revealed names of at least four sects, namely:

1. Apara—Mahavinaseliya,
2. Bahusrutiya,
3. Mahasasaka, and
4. Maha-Viharavasin.

The first two sects were off-shoots of the Mahasanghikas (Mahayana) while the other two sects represented the Theravada tradition.

Nagarjunakonda marks an important landmark in the history of Buddhist architecture in India. Several trends from different directions converged here to give rise to new architectural forms. "The most developed complex of Nagarjunakonda consisted of a Stupa built on a square platform, flanked by two apsidal shrines and a quadrangular monastery enclosing a pillared hall. The wheel-shaped plan, which may be an outcome of a long series of experiment in different parts of India, including Andhra-desa, reached its perfection in the hands of the Nagarjunakonda architects. In such wheel-shaped plan, one may notice not only an improvement over an earlier building tradition but also a

successful attempt at transforming an idea, a sacred Buddhist symbol into an architectural entity."

The glorious rise of Nagarjunakonda in A.D. third century looks like a golden page from history. With the downfall of the Ikshvakus in the early years of A.D. fourth century, Nagarjunakonda relapsed into darkness, its shrines, its artistic tradition, and its contacts with the Buddhist world—all vanished.

The Nagarjunakonda monuments, the treasure trove of Buddhist art and culture, remained unknown for centuries and came to light only in March, 1926 when A.R. Saraswati, Telgu Assistant to the Archaeological Superintendent for Epigraphy, Archaeological Survey of India, discovered this site. A.H. Longhurst, Superintendent, Archaeological Survey of India, Southern Circle was the first to commence excavation here in 1927 which continued till February 1931. He discovered a number of Buddhist monasteries. In 1938 a limited operation was carried out by T.N. Ramachandran.

Nagarjunakonda assumed importance in the 1950's when the construction of the Nandikonda project was conceived as a result of which the valley was to be transformed into a reservoir. In order to salvage, whatever possible, of the priceless art treasure, which the Ikshvakus had created during more than 1600 years, a special project for extensive excavation was formed in August 1954. Accordingly, R. Subramanyam, a Superintendent of the Archaeological Survey of India, excavated the entire valley within a short span of six years exposing about 120 sites.

All the sites now stand submerged by the gigantic multipurpose Nagarjunasagar Dam, which at 124 metres (409 feet), is the highest masonry dam in the world, and a giant among engineering schemes. Yet the glory of Nagarjunakonda shines in the midst of the third largest man-made lake in the world.

B. OBJECTS OF INTEREST

1. The Maha-Stupa

The Nagarjunakonda monuments equidistante from Hyderabad and Macherla is about 22 kilometres from the Nagarjunasagar dam and 150 kilometres by road from

Hyderabad, the capital of Andhra Pradesh. Hundreds of beautiful sculptures and some of the monuments which would have been submerged by the construction of the dam have been lifted to the top of a hill, which stands right in the midst of the reservoir. The island museum, which is unique and first of its kind in the world, can be reached by a launch from Anuppu, the jetty point, about 8 Kms from Vijayapuri, a little town which has sprung up around the dam. From Anuppu, Nagarjunakonda is about 14 Kms apart.

A few monuments have been faithfully reconstituted out of ancient materials on the Nagarjunakonda and on the east bank of the reservoir where the road from Macherla ends. Important monuments which can be seen at Nagarjunakonda are: Maha-Stupa and apsidal shrine—Site 1; monastery—Site 4: apsidal shrine—Site 43; and Stupa with Swastika inset—Site 59.

The Maha-Chaitya (Stupa) was the first and the most magnificent shrine to be constructed at Nagarjunakonda. The Maha-Chaitya (Site 1), and its allied units took about a decade to reach its final form, and all the time it received the munificence of the pious lady Chamtasri, the sister of Vasisthiputra Chamtamula, although the actual construction was done under the supervision of one, the Reverend Ananda. Built in the sixth regnal year of Virapurushadatta, the Stupa wheel-shaped on plan, had a diameter of about 27.5 m. with ayaka platforms surmounted by ayaka-pillars at the four cardinal directions.

Basically, it was a saririka (corporeal) Stupa, for it disclosed a reliquary including a tooth-relic, and the inscription alludes to it as the dhatu or bodily remains of Lord Buddha (samma-sambudhasa dhatuvara-parigahita). The Maha-Vihara and the apsidal Chaitya Griha (Stupa-shrine) meant for a much smaller Stupa were set-up respectively in the fifteenth and the eighteenth regnal years of the same king for the Apara-mahavinaseliya sect. Some establishments nearby were built between the sixth and the fifteenth regnal years, for one Bodhisri, a layworshipper from Govagama, donated an apsidal Stupa shrine in the fourteenth regnal year of Virapurushadatta to the Ceylonese monastery (Site 43) on the Chula-Dhammagiri. Besides the apsidal shrine, the establishment had a fourwinged monastery, with a Buddha-shrine and a Stupa.

2. The Museum

The Island Museum preserves and displays relics from all the identified historical epochs of Nagarjunakonda. Some of the exhibits in the museum as described by H. Sarkar and B.N. Misra in the guide on Nagarjunakonda are as follows:

A. Kek-Gallery

Key-Gallery offers the choicest specimens in the collection such as jewellery, beads, coins, relic-caskets and lime-stone sculptures including a colossal Buddha.

1. Relic-Caskets

All the important Stupas of Nagarjunakonda yielded various reliquaries of gold, silver, copper and glazed pottery. The one exhibited in show-case-3 along with a sketch came from Stupa-8 belonging to the Mahisasaka sect. The gold reliquary containing relics in the form of bones, gold and silver flowers was kept inside a silver casket, which in turn, was placed inside a copper one, the group to be lodged ultimately inside a glazed earthenware receptacle simulating a miniature Stupa.

2. Sculptures

The most attractive piece of the gallery is the colossal statue of Lord Buddha standing to a height of about 3 m. Originally found in several fragments at Site 4, the image, like any other sculpture from Nagarjunakonda, stands in frontal pose holding the hem of his garment in the left hand, while the right hand (broken) is granting protection.

On the eastern wing of the Key-Gallery is the panel depicting the main episodes of Buddha's life. It is dated in the twenty-fourth regnal year of Ehuvala Chamtamula when a member of a merchant community, Kumaranandi, donated the frieze to the monastery at Site-106. In its elegant style of execution as well as in the portrayal of human moods the relief ranks as one of the best specimens of Nagarjunakonda art.

A bust of Buddha notable for its sharp features, is the first exhibit to be seen on the other side of the gallery, which has a number of architectural pieces like the cornice-beam, coping-stone and ayaka-pata. The gods carrying away in procession the relinquished crown of Gautama Buddha at the time of his great renunciation is the theme depicted within a medallion on an ayaka-pata. In the next exhibit are carved the scenes of conversion of Nanda, cousin of Buddha. It is one of the finest pieces of Nagarjunakonda showing from right to left the scenes of the meeting of Nanda and his wife Sundari with Buddha, to ensure ceremony for Nanda's ordination, Buddha flying to heaven with Nanda, and the final conversion.

The next exhibit is a drum-slab from Site-3 carved with a developed form of a Stupa. It is followed by a cornice-beam depicting the five important life-events of Gautama Buddha, viz., Birth, Great Renuncation, Mara's attack, First Sermon at Sarnath and Mahaparinirvana. On the next slab is to be seen the serpent king Muchalinda, a favourite motif of the Nagarjunakonda artists.

B. Main Gallery

1. Jataka stories

The sculptures in the northern wing of the gallery depict the Jataka tales carved variously on drum-slabs, dome-slabs and cornice beams. The sculptures preserved in this Museum relate to eight Jatakas, namely:

1. Sasa-Jataka,
2. Champeyya-Jataka,
3. Sibi-Jataka,
4. Mandhata-Jataka,
5. Mahapadma-Jataka,
6. Vessantara-Jataka,
7. Dasaratha-Jataka, and
8. Mahahamsa-Jataka.

2. Life scenes of the Buddha

On the southern and western wings are arranged several dome-slabs depicting the important life scenes of the Buddha. In the upper compartment of a dome-slab is shown the scene in which Sumedha, who resides in the Tushita heaven as Boddhisattva, resolving to take his final birth on earth as Gautama. The lower compartment depicts his descent in a heavenly chariot as a white elephant accompanied by celestial

musicians, to enter the body of Maya. There are seven scenes, carved on a cornice-beam, which present vividly the subsequent events. When Mayadevi delivers the child in the Lumbini garden, four Gods receive the child on a golden net. Maya stands holding the Sal tree, and a lady bears the staff of royalty. Next Asita examines the mark of the child, which is represented by a pair of feet on the cloth, and predicts that he would be a Chakravartin amongst the kings or the sages. The child is then taken through the streets of Kapilavastu and the Yaksha pays homage to him.

When grown up Siddhartha witnesses four visions that led to his renunciation: sees a corpse, and old man, diseased man and an ascetic. All these make him contemplate on the woes of life, and he decides to renunciate. Kanthaka, the horse and Chhandaka, its groom, carry him away from Kapilavastu. Even the Gods are ready for the auspicious moment: Indra spreads parasol on him: four Dik-palas or guardians of the directions hold hoofs of the horse on palms so that there is no noise; musicians and bearers carrying flag-staff, sword and fly-whisk accompany him. Then on the banks of the river Anoma, he changes his garments for a monk's dress. In the middle compartment of the same stele, it is seen the Gods varying the relinquished crown of Buddha. Chhandaka returns to Kapilavastu with Kanyhaka, and narrates the event to King Suddhodana who is shocked to hear the news.

Siddhartha practises penances for six years, at the end of which, at Uruvela (Bodh-Gaya), he accepts milk and rice from Sujata, and sits under the Bodhi-tree determined not to give up seat until he has gained full insight. Mara, the Evil one, attacks him but has to retreat. Eventually he attains enlightenment and becomes Buddha.

Then the Buddha proceeds to Rishipatana Mrigadava (Sarnath) to preach to the five monks where he propounds his doctrine.

In course of time, Buddha visits Kapilavastu and approaches the apartments of Yasodhara who stands waiting at the door. Rahula enquires of him about inheritance and is ultimately converted. Buddha goes to the Trayastrimsa heaven to preach to his mother Maya. Also, he converts the robber Angulimala, the emperor Ajatasatru, the naga of

Uruvela, and the Yaksha Alavaka.

Passing through these and similar other events Buddha attains Maha-parinirvana at Kushinagar.

3. Inscriptions

The earliest epigraphic record is the four-line Prakrit inscription on a pillar of the sixth regnal year of Vijaya Satakarni, one of the last Satavahana kings, in Brahmi script of A.D. third century.

A Prakrit inscription in eight lines on an ayaka-pillar records adoration to Buddha and informs that Chamtasri, the aunt of the ruling king and sister of Chamtamula, erected the pillar for the sake of attainment by herself of the bliss of nirvana in the sixth regnal year of king Virapurushadatta.

Another Prakrit inscription on a stone pillar records the erection of a fully-equipped monastery for the Bahusrutiya sect by Mahadevi Bhattidevi, wife of the Maharaja Mathariputra Virapurushadatta in the second regnal year of Raja Vasishthiputra Ehuvala Chamtamula.

The Prakrit inscription on a foot-print slab records the installation of the Buddha-pada in the monastery of the Vibhajyavadin and Theravadin teachers who were experts in the nine-fold teaching of Buddha and who converted to Buddhism the peoples of Kasmira, Gandhara, Yavana, Vanavasi and Tamraparni island.

3. Vijayapuri

The Buddhist heritage of Nagarjunakonda relives in the modern development in the area. Nagarjunasagar dam has been named after the great Buddhist saint and savant Nagarjuna. A granite pillar, engraved with Buddhist symbols, commemorates the building of the dam which began in 1955. The town ship that has grown up along the dam is called Vijayapuri, after the old capital of the Ikshvaku kings. A beautiful Buddha picture adorns the main gate of the Vijaya Vihar Guest House in the Hill Colony. Finally, there stands a lifesize statue of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, a symbol of modern Buddhism, just in front of the Project House in the same colony of Vijayapuri.

13

Ajanta

The Buddhists were the pioneers in the excavation of rock-cut temples in India. Not only that, they in fact excavated the largest number of caves. Even today there are over 1200 Buddhist caves in India. Of these, about 900 excavations are in Maharashtra alone. The remaining 325 caves are in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. All these caves were excavated with pick-axe from the solid rock faces and carved with primitive tools, viz., hammer and chisel.

The Buddhist caves are broadly of two types—the Chaitya temple, a place of worship, and the Vihara, monastery, a place of residence for the monk. The Chaitya hall has vaulted roof and its entrance is topped by a large window inside and it has a shrine or image chamber. The Vihara has a large hall for congregation and has residential cells on three sides.

Of all the caves in India, the wonderful caves of Ajanta have attracted and aroused the admiration of scholars and tourists from all over the world. The Ajanta Caves are unique as they combine three best specimens of art: architecture, sculpture and painting. The growth and decay of these caves correspond to the rise and fall of Buddhism in India. The Ajanta Caves belong to the period from 2nd century B.C. to

about A. D. 7th century. According to Percy Brown the construction work at Ajanta came to standstill in A.D. 642 with the overthrow of the Chalukyan king by Narashimhavarman I, the Pallava king, who forcibly removed all the skilled workers to work on the Hindu temples in his kingdom. This episode perhaps explains the reason for some of the unfinished caves at Ajanta.

The Ajanta Caves are 106 kilometres by road from Aurangabad and about 60 kilometres by road from Jalgaon, a railway junction on Delhi-Bombay and Allahabad-Bombay mainline of the Central Railway.

The Ajanta Caves fell into desolation and ruin after Buddhism declined in India. They were covered with natural growth and lay buried in the jungle-clad slopes for more than a thousand years when they were accidentally discoverd in 1819 by a pair of British soldiers who were on patrol duty on the western mountain range. The Ajanta Caves are the product of both the Theravada (Hinayana) and Mahayana Buddhists. Of the 30 caves in Ajanta, five (Nos. 9, 10, 19, 26 and 29) are Chaitya halls. The remaining are Viharas. The oldest caves created by the early Buddhists belonging to the period from 2nd century B.C. to A.D. 2nd century. In this group are two Chaityas (Nos. 9 and 10) and four Viharas (Nos. 8, 12, 13, and 30). The remaining 24 caves were added by the Buddhist devotees after a long interval during the period from the fifth to seventh centuries.

The Ajanta Caves have earned world-wide fame as the beautiful and marvellous paintings have added lustre to the architectural and sculptural value of these rock-cut temples. As says Dr. Moti Chandra, "The 5th century-6th century Wall paintings of Ajanta chiefly deal with the Buddha's life and the Jataka stories. The painters, however, have drawn copiously from the contemporary life and in that way Ajanata does not remain only a religious art glorifying Buddhism but provides a faithful record of the life and culture of the people." Of the 30 caves in Ajanta, as many as sixteen contain mural paintings. The best paintings are to be found in caves 1, 2, 16, 17 and 19. The best sculptures are in caves 1, 4, 17, 19 and 26.

Looking at the Ajanta paintings as a teacher of art, J. Griffiths says: "I find the work so accomplished in execution,

so consistent in convention, so vivacious and varied in design and full of such evident delight in beautiful form and colour, that I cannot help ranking it with the same early art, which the world has agreed to praise, in Italy . . . . For the purpose of art education, no better examples could be placed before an Indian art student than those to be found in the caves of Ajanta. Here we have the art with life in it, human faces full of expressions, limbs drawn with grace and action, flowers which bloom, birds which soar and beasts that spring or fight or patiently carry burdens—all are taken from Nature's book—growing after her pattern."

Cave-1 is one of the finest examples of Vihara architecture evolved towards the end of A.D. fifth century.

The facade is lavishly ornamented, its beauty enhanced by six richly carved columns on the verandah. The ornate doorway leads into a big hall, 64 ft. square. On three sides there are rows of cells. Beyond the ante-chamber facing the entrance is a huge Buddha image grouped with the Master's first five disciples and a wheel between two deer. One Central pillar in the right row has a curious carving done with remarkable realism; four deer in different positions have a single head which seems to belong to each one.

The paintings mainly illustrate Jataka stories. The two side-walls of the ante-chamber present remarkable scenes from the Buddha's life in large-scale compositions. The one at the left depicts the scene when Bodhisattva was about to attain Enlightenment. The composition on the right wall is the "Miracle of Sravasti". Here the Buddha has turned himself into hundreds of Buddhas in different poses.

The wall of the back corridor, to the left and right of the ante-chamber, contains two majestic Budhisattvas which are among the Ajanta masterpieces. The one to the left is Padmapani. His eyes are lowered meditatively, his face has depths of spiritual calm born of compassion for all living forms. This great picture has fascinated the art-critics of many countries. Beside the Bodhisattva is his attractive wife, a dark beauty who is featured often in Ajanta reproductions.

The other Bodhisattva, Vajrapani, is richly bejewelled. He leans gracefully against an attendant. A king offers him flowers.

Cave-2 is somewhat alike in plan to Cave-1. The verandah has a lovely painted ceiling. Among the excellent murals, one on the left wall of the hall, dramatizes the legend of the Buddha's birth with some vivid panels. Here the Bodhisattva is seen in one of the Heavens. Maya has a strange dream. While she sleeps, a white elephant with six tusks enters her body. Wondering, she speaks to her husband about the dream. The astrologers are invited to interpret the dream.

The lower panel depicts Maya on her way to her father's place followed by the nativity scene in the Lumbini garden. Lastly, the new-born child walks seven steps over lotus blossoms while Indra, king of the Gods, holds an umbrella over his head.

The ceiling decorations in the ante-chamber and the shrine are remarkable. One of the ceiling-panels shows a procession of twenty-three geese rendered with great skill.

Cave-4 is the largest Vihara at Ajanta. The decorated main entrance leads to a hall with twenty-eight pillars. To the right of the door is the carving of Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara to whom devotees are praying for deliverance from the eight fears. The shrine has a large image of the Buddha in the company of Vajrapani and Padmapani.

Cave-10 an apsidal Chaitya, is the largest excavation at Ajanta, and the second largest in India, the first being at Karla. This cave is 369 square metres in area (29.5 metres long and 12.5 metres wide) with 39 pillars.

Cave-16 is one of the most beautiful cave at Ajanta. An inscription of late A.D. 6th century gives its history; a Minister of the royal court had it excavated as a gift for the "best of ascetics".

The nativity story started in Cave-2 is continued here. Siddhartha goes to school and practises archery. He witnesses a ploughing contest and the sight of the tired toilers in the fields and the bleeding oxen prompts him to meditate about life's realities.

The masterpiece in this cave is a painting on the left wall, famed, as "The dying Princess". There is agony in the drooping, sightless eyes, the helpless abandon of the fingers, the farewell gestures. The emotion of the attendants beside the princess is well expressed in their faces and attitudes. The

princess is possibly Sundari, the broken hearted wife of the Buddha's half-brother Nanda, who left his palace and gave himself to monastic life.

Cave-17 is in its design very much like Cave-16 and belongs to the same period A.D. 6th century but it has in addition an ante-chamber. Its entrance, with the decorative panels and the female figures embellishing the corner projections, is considered to be "a thing of supreme artistic value".

On the portice's right wall is illustrated the subjugation of a charging elephant, one of the eight great miracles attributed to the Buddha. Devadatta, the Buddha's jealous cousin, made three attempts on the Master's life. When the first two failed he set up an enraged elephant against the Buddha. The beast, as it came charging. stopped and prostrated itself in submission.

Inside the cave there are paintings depicting Jataka stories and some historic incidents. A large composition on the right wall is recognized as a great work of art. The story recounts Prince Simhala's conquest of Ceylon (Sri Lanka). Shipwrecked, Simhala with his five hundred merchants was cast ashore on an island of ogresses who enticed them in the guise of beautiful women. This painting treats realistically a a line of boats ashore, a charming group of dancers, a procession of elephants and finally the coronation.

The back wall of the ante-chanmber contains the excellent "Mother and Child before Buddha". The occasion is the Buddha's return to his place door, a begging bowl in his hand. The baby boy he had left is now seven years old. At his mother's bidding Rahula begs of the Buddha his rightful inheritance as a son.

Cave-19, a Chaitya-hall of the late Mahayana period, has an exquisitely carved facade with many large Buddha figures in relief. The great arched window adds to its grandeur. Boldly conceived and superbly executed in minute detail, this chapel is regarded as one of the best examples of Buddhist art. With its large number of stone figures it has aptly been called "the sculptor's treasure-chest".

Cave-26 is almost as crowded with sculptures as Cave-19. But this Chaitya-hall is larger in size. It has a colossal

reclining Buddha figure—representing Parinirvana. The Buddha is lying on his right side between two Sal trees, Ananda and Kashyapa are shown standing mourning his passing. In front of the bed are other disciples and bhikkhus in grief. Above panel has devas scattering flowers. The same wall presents a relief of "The Temptation of the Buddha", a theme seen in mural in Cave-1. On the left is Mara seated on an elephant and assaulting Gautama with his demon forces. On the right is Mara's retreat. There is another panel showing Buddha in the attitude of teaching.

14

Ellora

The caves at Ellora, about 30 Kms. from Aurangabad, are a combination of three religious systems; Buddhism, Hinduism and Jainism. The first 12 caves at Ellora are the earliest and were excavated by the Buddhists over a period of 200 years from A.D. 550 to about A.D. 750. Unlike the paintings at Ajanta, sculptures, massive in size and superb in execution, dominate the Ellora Caves. They portray chiefly the Buddha, Bodhisattvas and other divinities and follow the accepted formulae of such representations. However, these being a late Mahayana creation, Hindu influence is noticeable. The notable Buddhist caves at Ellora are 2, 5, 6, 10, 11 and 12.

Cave-2 has twelve massive columns with cushion capitals to support the roof. The entrance to the main shrine is flanked by the Bodhisattvas. The huge Buddha image at the rear is seated on a Lion Throne with Padmapani and Manjusri as Chauri bearers. The galleries, however, have Buddha figures seated on lotuses in the traditional posture of a preacher, with Bodhisattvas in attendance.

Cave-5 is the largest Vihara, 117 ft. by 56 ft., and has twenty-four pillars. There is a seated Buddha image in the main shrine attended by Avalokitesvara on one side and Maitreya on the other side.

Cave-6 is notable for its ante-chamber which has several interesting sculptures. These include figures from Vajrayana pantheon. There is also a figure of the Hindu Goddess of learning, Saraswati, well-known in India today in the same representation. The river Goddesses Ganga and Yamuna are also carved.

Cave-10, known as Visvakarma, or the Carpenters' Cave, is the only proper Chaitya-hall at Ellora. Its facade, richly decorated, has the semblance of masonry work. A porch surmounted by a gallery leads to another gallery inside the chapel. The Chaitya-hall third largest in India measures 26 metres in length, 13.4 metres in width and 10.4 metres in height. In the far end is the Stupa 8.2 metres high and 4.9 metres in diameter. Besides the large number of seated and standing Buddhas, there are a number of images of the Bodhisattvas. A staircase leads to a large pillared court and to a gallery with a railed terrace.

Cave-11 and Cave-12 are large, three-storey structures alike in design and represent the peak of the earlier style at Ellora. Cave-12 is the bigger of the two and is more impressive. Known as Teen Thal, it is a vast excavation. The facade, nearly 50 ft. high plain and austere-looking has porches supported by pillars in each storey. The first storey is 115 ft. by 43 ft. The large hall in the second storey, 115 ft. by 70 ft. (35 metre by 21.33 metre) and 12 ft. high, is divided likewise by forty square pillars into five aisels. The interiors make a striking contrast to the undecorated facade, for the hall in each floor has galleries of images of the Buddha and almost all the deities of the Vajrayana pantheon. Among the huge Buddha figures, with Avalokitesvara, Padmapani and Vajrapani in attendance, the one in the shrine, with arms folded and the face deeply meditative is the most impressive one.

In the Brahmanical group of caves (Nos. 13-29) at Ellora, Cave-16, known as Kailasa, Siva's mountain abode, is one of the best and the most important monument. Chiselled from one enormous rock during A.D. eight or ninth century, the temple has magnificent sculpture.

More than a mile away at the northern spur of the side, there are five Jaina Caves. Of these, Cave-32, known as Indra

Sabha or Assembly Hall of Indra, king of the Gods, is the best. It is quite decorative.

Aurangabad, the base city for Ajanta-Ellora Caves, has also 12 Buddhist caves. These caves are 3 Kms north of the city beyond Bibi-ka-Maqbara. The site is reached after a hard climb and the two groups are separated by a mile accross the hillside.

Cave-1 is the Vihara of A.D. 7th century. Cave-2 also of the 7th century is the Chaitya-hall in which a gigantic seated Buddha occupies the shrine. Cave-3 has a large seated Buddha with Avalokitesvara and Manjusri on either side. The side walls have two life size groups of votaries kneeling in adoration before the Buddha, one offering garlands and other with hands clasped. Cave-4 is a simple Chaitya of A.D. 1st or 2nd century.

Cave-6, the first in the second groups, is a Chaitya-cum-Vihara. Its shrine has a seated Buddha with Bodhisattvas in attendance, and on either side kneeling devotees as in Cave-3. Cave-7 is the latest and the most decorative one at Aurangabad. In this cave, the shrine is in the centre with the processional path around it. To the right of the main door leading to the passage is a panel containing Manjusri, with man and woman attendants. On the left is a panel of the Litany of Avalokitesvara. In each scene around the Bodhisattva two figures seem to be saved from some form of danger. They are met by Avalokitesvara flying to their rescue. The eight dangers are of 'fire', the "sword of an enemy", "chains or fetters (imprisonment)", shipwreck or water", "the attack of a lion", "danger from snakes", "an enraged elephant", and the last "death". The sanctuary contains a large image of the Buddha seated on a Lion throne, with celestial musicians and flying figures over his shoulders.

15

Kanheri

There are 109 caves at Kanheri, near Borivli beyond the National Park in Bombay. Majority of the caves at Kanheri are Cells for the monks with a stone bench and verandah in front. The earliest excavations at Kanheri were by the Theravada monks in the 2nd century B.C.

The main Chaitya (Cave-3) at Kanheri is 317 sq. metres in area and the fourth largest in India. It is 15.2 metres in height and has 34 pillars. The Stupa is about 5 metres in height and has a series of relic caskets along the centre of the drum. It was excavated in about A.D. 180 and was used both by the Theravada and the Mahayana Buddhists. Among the sculptures added by some Mahayana followers sometime in A.D. 5th century are colossal statues of the Buddha nearly seven metres high at each end of the verandah. There are also standing figures of the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara and the Buddha on the front wall to the left of the verandah. The sculptures on the front screen are of the donor couples belonging to A.D. 2nd century.

Cave-10 on the right side of the ravine is the largest Vihara at Kanheri. It is also known as the Darbar hall as it was used as an assembly or convocation hall. It has 12 cells in its eastern and southern wall. The cell opposite to the entrance

is carved with a seated Buddha attended by Boddhisattvas on either side. The inner assembly hall is 22.3 metres in length and 9.8 metres in width.

Cave-41 has a representation of an eleven-headed Avalokitesvara, said to be the only relic of its kind in India. Cave-50 has a panel showing Buddha preaching. Cave-90 has the largest number of Buddha images. It also has a fine sculptured litany of Avalokitesvara in his role as the saviour of the Eight Great Perils.

An interesting feature of Kanheri caves is the number of steps and paths, some with hand rails, leading from one cave to the next. Another important feature is the system of runnels, cisterns and reservoirs, which provided water to every cave.

Kanheri is the only place in India where monastic caves were continuously occupied by Buddhist monks from the second century B.C. to about A.D. tenth century and even beyond. This is evident from a Japanese inscription of a Buddhist pilgrim of the Nichiren Sect engraved on the walls of Cave-66.

16

Karla

The Buddhist caves at Karla or Karle are about 12 km from Lonavla on the Bombay-Poona Road. Lonavla is 128 km by road from Bombay. The Karla caves are at a height of 150 metres and are reached by confortable steps made by ancient Buddhists.

The arched Chaitya-hall is the most magnificent cave at Karla. It belongs to the first century B.C. and is the largest rock-cut temple in India. It measures 525 sq. metres or 37.8 metres × 13.9 metres in area. It is 14 metres high and has two rows of 15 monolith pillars, the capitals of each are surmounted by well-sculptured man-and woman-riders, seated on kneeling elephants, with their arms circling each other. At the further end of the temple is a huge dome-shaped Stupa. Its timber arch, which decorates the roof, is the finest example of wood work of the early period. One of its own inscription tells us that the Karla Chaitya was excavated by one Bhutapala, a merchant of Vejayanti (in Maharashtra) and was regarded as the most excellent rock mansion in Jambudvipa (India).

The Mahayana Buddhists, who later occupied this Chaitya, added in the verandah a few images of the Buddha, attended by Padmapani and Manjusri and other imagery in A.D. 5th-

6th centuries.

Originally on each side of the facade, a little ahead of the entrance were two pillars about 15 metres in height. The pillar on the left stands on a wide cylindrical base, surmounted by a bell shaped capital on which were four lions supporting a wheel (now damaged). The pillar on the right was destroyed due to land slide. The temple of Ekavira now occupies the place where this pillar stood. The temple of Hindu Goddess Ekavira is said to have been built in 1866.

There are 22 caves above the village of Bhaja, just opposite to the Karla caves, about a mile from the Malavli railway station. These caves date back from second century B.C. and are one of the earliest in India. The use of timber in the rock-cut architecture is a special feature of these caves. The Chaitya-hall, which is 18 metres in length with 27 plain pillars is a fine example of early Hinayana temple.

Appendix I (a)

APPROACH TO BUDDHIST SHRINES

A. From Nearest Rail-Head

S.No.	Shrine	Nearest Railway Station	Road Connection
1.	Lumbini (in Nepal, 10 km from the Indian Border)	(i) Nantanwa on North-Eastern Railway in Gorakhpur District, U.P.	(i) 20 km from Nautanwa via Sunoli —Bhairva (in Nepal)
		(ii) Nowgarh on North-Eastern Railway in Basti District U.P.	(ii) 35 km from Nowgarh via Kakrawaha
2.	Bodh Gaya	Gaya on Eastern Railway in Bihar	12 km from Gaya Railway-Station
3.	Sarnath	(i) Sarnath on North-Eastern Railway in U.P.	(i) 1.6 km from Sarnath Railway Station
		(ii) Varanasi Cantt. Railway Station	(ii) 10 km from Varanasi Cantt.
4.	Kushinagar	Gorakhpur on North-Eastern Railway in U.P.	55 km from Gorakhpur Railway-Station
5.	Sravasti (Saheth-Maheth)	Balrampur on Ganda-Gorakhpur loop line of North-Eastern in U.P.	21 km from Balrampur Railway-Station.
6.	Sankasya (Sankissa)	(i) Pakhna on Shikohabad-Farrukkhabad loop-line of Northern Railway in U.P.	(i) 11 km from Pakhna Railway Station
		(ii) Farrukkhabad on Northern Railway in U.P.	(ii) 64 km from Farukkhabad Railway Station
7.	Rajgir (Rajagriha)	Rajgir on Bakhtiyarpur—Rajgir Light Railway in Bihar	(i) 102 km from Patna (ii) 65 km from Gaya
8.	Vaisali	Muzaffarpur on North-Eastern Railway in Bihar	(i) 36 km from Muzaffarpur Railway Station (ii) 55 km from Patna across the Ganga
9.	Nalanda	Rajgir on Bakhtiyarpur-Rajgir Light Railway in Bihar	(i) 12 km from Rajgir (ii) 90 km from Patna
10.	Sanchi	Sanchi on the main Central Railway line in Madhya Pradesh	(i) 10 km from Vidisa Railway Station (ii) 44 km from Bhopal
11.	Amaravati	Guntur on Southern Railway in Andhra Pradesh	(i) 32 km from Guntur Railway Station (ii) 75 km from Vijayawada
12.	Nagarjunakonda	Macherala on Southern Railway in Andhra Pradesh	(i) 25 km from Macherla Railway Station (ii) 150 km from Hyderabad
13.	Ajanta Caves	Jalgaon on Central Railway in Maharashtra	(i) 60 km from Jalgaon Railway Station (ii) 106 km from Aurangabad
14.	Ellora Caves	Aurangabad on Central Railway in Maharashtra	30 km from Aurangabad
15.	Kanheri Caves	Borivli on Western Railway in Maharashtra	(i) 8 km from Borivli Railway Station (ii) 42 km from Bombay
16.	Karla Caves	Lonavala on Western Railway in Maharashtra	(i) 10 km from Lonavla Railway Station (ii) 109 km from Bombay on Bombay-Foona Road

Appendix I (b)

(ii) Nearest Airport

Shrine	*Airport*	*Distance in Kilometres*
1. Lumbini	Gorakhpur	108
2. Bodh Gaya	Patna	105
3. Sarnath	Varanasi	32
4. Kushinagar	Gorakhpur	55
5. Sravasti	Lucknow/Gorakhpur	160, 194
6. Sankasya	Agra	175
7. Rajgir	Patna	102
8. Vaisali	Patna	55
9. Nalanda	Patna	90
10. Sanchi	Bhopal	72
11. Amaravati	Vijayawada	82
12. Nagarjunakonda	Hyderabad	150
13. Ajanta Caves	Aurangabad	106
14. Ellora Caves	Aurangabad	30
15. Kanheri Caves	Bombay	42
16. Karla Caves	Pune	56

Appendix II

TABLE OF DISTANCES FROM SHRINE TO SHRINE BY ROAD IN KILOMETRES

From	*To*	*Distance in km*
1. Lumbini (Kapilvastu)	Bodh Gaya	470
2. Bodh Gaya	Sarnath	250
3. Bodh Gaya	Rajgir	70
4. Rajgir	Nalanda	15
5. Nalanda	Vaisali	145
6. Vaisali	Kushinagar	140
7. Nalanda	Sarnath	338
8. Sarnath	Kushinagar	250
9. Kushinagar	Lumbini	130
10. Lumbini	Sravasti	210
11. Sravasti (Saheth-Maheth)	Sankasya	400
12. Sankasya (Sankissa)	Sarnath	485
13. Sarnath	Sanchi	780
14. Sanchi	Ajanta Caves	485
15. Ajanta	Ellora Caves	125
16. Ellora	Kanheri Caves	365
17. Kanheri	Karla Caves	100
18. Karla	Amaravati	880
19. Amaravati	Nagarjunakonda	140
20. Nagarjunakonda	Bodh Gaya	1650

Appendix III

APPROACH TO BUDDHIST CAVE TEMPLES IN INDIA

S. No.	*Place*	*No. of Caves*	*Location*
1	*2*	*3*	*4*
	I—IN MAHARASHTRA		
1.	Ajanta	30	106 km from Aurangabad and 60 km from Jalgaon.
2.	Aurangabad	12	3 km North of the City beyond Bibi-ka-Maqbra.
3.	Bedsa	12	18 km from Karla Caves and 7 km from Kamshet.
4.	Bhaja	22	Just opposite to Karla Caves, 1 km beyond Malvali railway station.
5.	Ellora	12	30 km from Aurangabad.
6.	Junnar	400	90 km from Pune.
7.	Kanheri	109	Near Borivli behind the National Park in Bombay.
8.	Karla	6	10 km from Lonavala on Bombay-Pune Road.
9.	Karad	66	7 km South-West of the town of Karad.
10.	Kol	7	East of Mahad, across the river Savitri.
11	Kondane	16	16 km North-West of Karla Caves.

(Contd.)

1	*2*	*3*	*4*
12	Kondivite or Mahakali	18	14 km South of the Kanheri Caves can be reached via Andheri.
13.	Kuda	25	On the eastern side of northern arm of the Marad-Janjira creek in South Konkan.
14.	Mahad	31	175 km from Bombay on Bombay-Goa Highway near Pali village.
15.	Nasik	23	8 km south-east of Nasik.
16.	Nenanvli	37	35 km from Pali town in Sadhagarh sub-division of Colaba (Raigad) district.
17.	Pitalkhora	13	68 km from Aurangabad on the road to Chahisgaon.
18.	Shelarwadi	6	24 km north-west of Pune.
19.	Shirwal	15	48 km south of Pune.
20.	Thanale	23	18 km from Pali town in Sadhagarh sub-division of Raigad district.
21.	Wai	9	6 km north of Wai town, between Shirwal and Satara.
	II—IN GUJARAT		
22.	Junagadh	50	At Uparkot, the old fort of Junagadh.
23.	Khambhalida	12	Near the town in the rocky banks of a stream.
24.	Sanah	62	25 km south-east of Una railway station.
25.	Talaja	36	48 km south of Bhavnagar.
	III—IN RAJASTHAN		
26.	Binnayaga	20	8 km north of Kholvi in Jhallawar district.
27.	Dhamner	70	19 km west of Shamgarh railway station in Mandasor district.
28.	Khejariabhop	10	16 km west of Kholvi.
29.	Kholvi	50	13 km from village of Dag in Jhallawar district.

(Contd.)

1	2	3	4
	IV—IN MADHYA PRADESH		
30.	Bagh	9	Few kilometres off the Indore-Ahmedabad Highway in Dhar district, Bagh is 176 km from Indore and 40 km south-west of Dhar.
	V—IN ANDHRA PRADESH		
31.	Guntapalli	2	45 km from Ellora railway station in West Godavari district.
32.	Sankaram	4	3 km north of Ankapalli railway station in Visakhapatnam district.

Appendix IV

THE HIMALAYAN SHRINES

1. Ladakh

Ladakh, a vast region of arid tracts and bare mountain ridges, lies to the east of the Kashmir Valley at a height of 9,000 to 18,000 feet above the sea level. It is bounded by Sinkiang, Tibet and Gilgit, now under occupation of Pakistan. Leh, the district headquarters of Ladakh, is now linked with Srinagar by a well metalled road (434 kilometres) which passes through the Zozi-la pass and the Fotela pass, at a height of 13,400 feet. Leh is also linked by air with Delhi, Srinagar and Chandigarh.

Buddhism seems to have entered this forbidden land before the beginning of the Christian era and has been a living religion there through the ages.

Today, the whole of Ladakh is dotted with monasteries, known as gompas or the monasteries at or around Leh. The most important ones are: the Lakhang monastery at Leh; Sankar gompa, just 3 kilometres from Leh; Hemis gompa, the largest and the most sacred monastery of the Red Order founded by Padmasambhava in A.D. 8th century, 45 kilometres from Leh, on the Ladakh-Tibet Road and Thiksey and Shey gompas, on the way to Hemis gompa. The monastery of Lama-yuru, 96 kilometres from Leh on the Leh-Kargil Road, contains a 16th century statue of

Avalokitevara with eleven heads and thousand hands. The Alchi monastery, beyond Lama-yuru, and about 10 kilometres off the highway, has beautiful paintings on its walls of the period from A.D. 9th century to A.D. 12th century.

Other important monasteries in Ladakh are: Likir, Spituk, Nimaun, Skara, Phiong, Stagna, Saspal, Rizong, Chimre, Mathoo and Sakte.

2. Sikkim

Sikkim, also known as Densong (rice-country), is the most fascinating region of the Himalayas. It lies on the southern slopes of the western half of the eastern Himalaya. It is bounded by Tibet on the north, Bhutan on the east and Nepal on the west. From Gangtok, the capital of Sikkim, the nearest rail-heads are Siliguri and New Jalpaiguri, at a distance of 114 kilometres and 125 kilometres respectively. Gangtok is also connected by road with Darjeeling and Kalimpong. The nearest airport is Bagdogra, 124 kilometres from Gangtok.

Sikkim became a separate political entity in A.D. 1642 when three lamas Gyalwa Lhatsun Chhempo, Sempa Chhempo and Rigzim Chhempo of Tibet of the Nyingmapa sect, consecrated Phuntshog Namgyal (1604-1670) as the King of the Lepcha land with the title of Chogyal (King who rules according to Chhorighteous law, and enforces respect for it) at Yaksam in western Sikkim. On 14 May 1975, Sikkim became a State of the Union of India. With this, the institution of Chogyal was abolished.

There are about 70 monasteries or gompas in Sikkim. Of these, the most important ones are:

1. *Pemayangtse Monastery*

The Pemayangtse Gompa at Gyalshing in western Sikkim is the most important and the principal religious centre in Sikkim. It belongs to the Nyingmapa sect, and was founded by Gyalwa Lhatsun Chhempo, the Chief Lama, who performed the consecration ceremony at Yaksam in 1642. The main images in this gompa of gold gilted huge statues of Guru Padmasambhava and Guru Tsengyat. There are also many other precious images and holy objects.

2. *Tashiding Monastery*

The monastery, in the centre of Sikkim, is the most holy place in Sikkim, having been blessed first by the great Padmasambhava in A.D. 8th century and later in the 17th century by Ngadak Sempa Chhempo, one of the Lamas who consecrated the first Chogyal at Yaksam in 1642.

3. *Rumtek Monastery*

This monastery in East Sikkim was founded in the 18th century. It belongs to the Karma Kargyud sect. After the Chinese occupation of Tibet, His Holiness the Gyalwa Karmapa, the 16th incarnate of the original Gyalwe Karmapa of Tibet, came to Sikkim with a number of Lamas, monks and lay followers. The late Chogyal of Sikkim made a gift of 74 acres of land to His Holiness for building up a monastery in the vicinity of Rumtek monastery. The Prayer Hall of the new monastery is embellished with beautiful mural paintings, and 1001 miniature golden images of Lord Buddha enshrined in niches on the wall facing the wide front door besides other statues of Buddhist Pantheon.

Other important monasteries are: Enche (at Gangtok), Phensang, Phedong, Tholang (in North Sikkim), Ralong Sanga-Choling, Khachod Palri, Dabdi, Sinon (in West Sikkim).

3. Himachal Pradesh

The Lahul-Spiti Valleys in Himachal Pradesh lie at a height of 10,000 to 16,000 above sea level and are separated from Kulu Valley by the famous Rohtang Pass, which is also known as the Pass of the Dead. The important monasteries in Lahul Valley are at Keylong, Kardurg, Billing, Shashan and Sissue, and those in Spiti are at Ki, Kye, Kito and Kibor. The ancient monasterics have wooden structures with pyramidal roofs and some of them have beautiful paintings depicting scenes from the Jatakas and Lord Buddha's life. The most important shrine in Lahul is Trilokinath, 3 km away from Keylong, the district headquarters of Lahul. The Buddhist monastery here is believed to have been founded by Guru Padma-Sambhava in A.D. eighth century.

The important monasteries in the district of Kinnaur (Kinner Desh) in Himachal Pradesh are at Kalpa, Kanum Poo

and Chini. Of all the monasteries in Kinnaur, those at Kanum, a village at an elevation of 9,600 ft. just on the Hindustan-Tibet Road about 86 miles from Simla, are the most important. Kanum has as many as 7 temples. Of them, the Kangyur monastery is the most ancient and is situated in the heart of the village. This monastery has a very good library containing 108 Kangyur and 200 Tanjur books written in Tibetan script. The Landup Ganfel Gompa is situated on the top of the village and is said to have been built by Shakya Virabhadra of Kashmir, the last Sangharaja of India, who fled from India in about A.D. 1213 and lived for 10 years in Tibet. On his way back, he stayed for some months at Kanum and founded this Vihara. The present structure is, however, of recent origin. This Gompa is quite spacious and has beautiful mural paintings on its walls.

Riwalsar, 15 miles from Mandi, is also an important Buddhist shrine in Himachal Pradesh. Here, a fair called Sichu takes place every year in the month of Phalguna (March-April) in the Mani-Pani temple—an old shrine dedicated to Padma sambhava who meditated here before going to Tibet in A.D. 747.

4. Arunachal Pradesh

Arunachal Pradesh (the land of Sunrise) was earlier known as the North-Eastern Frontier Agency—NEFA. It was elevated to the status of Union Territory of India with Itanagar as capital in January 1972. It is bordered by Tibet and China on the north, Bhutan on the west, Burma on the east and the State of Assam on the south.

In Arunachal Pradesh the Buddhist population is mainly concentrated in the districts of Kameng and Lohit.

The great monastery at Tawang, in the district of Kameng, is the oldest and the most sacred Buddhist shrine in Arunachal Pradesh. Built about 350 years ago on a 3048 metres high plateau, the Tawang monastery has more than 700 Buddhist scriptures of which eight large volumes of Getama are its prized possession.

Two other important monasteries in Arunachal Pradesh are at Dirang and Dzong.

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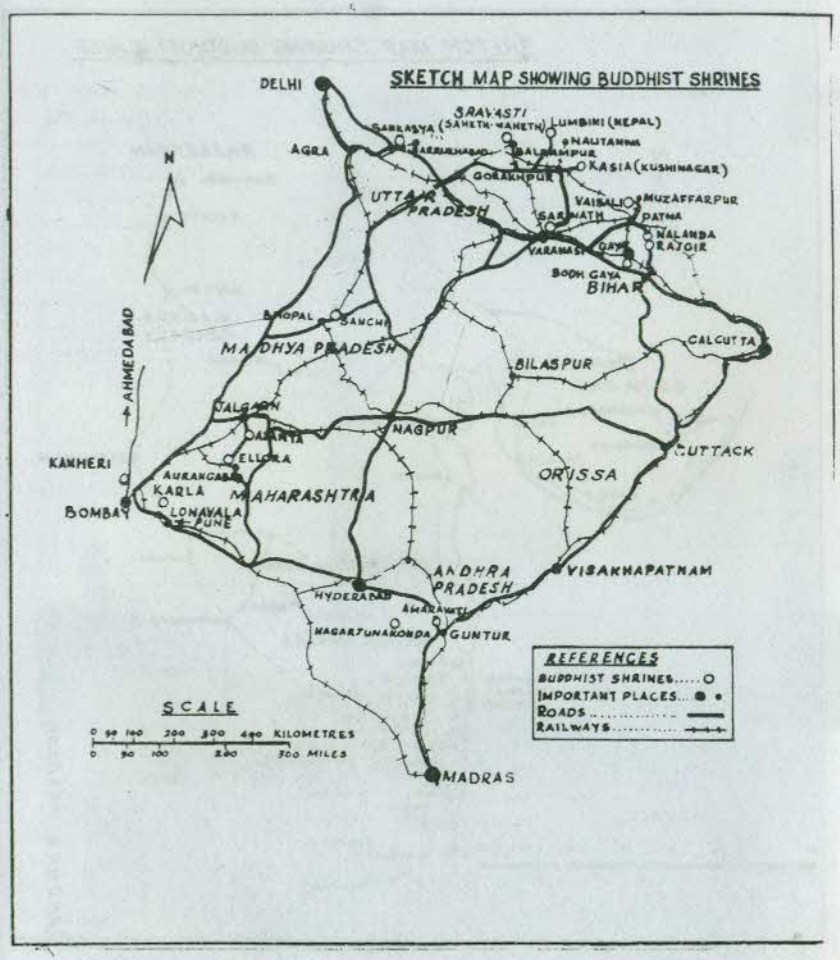
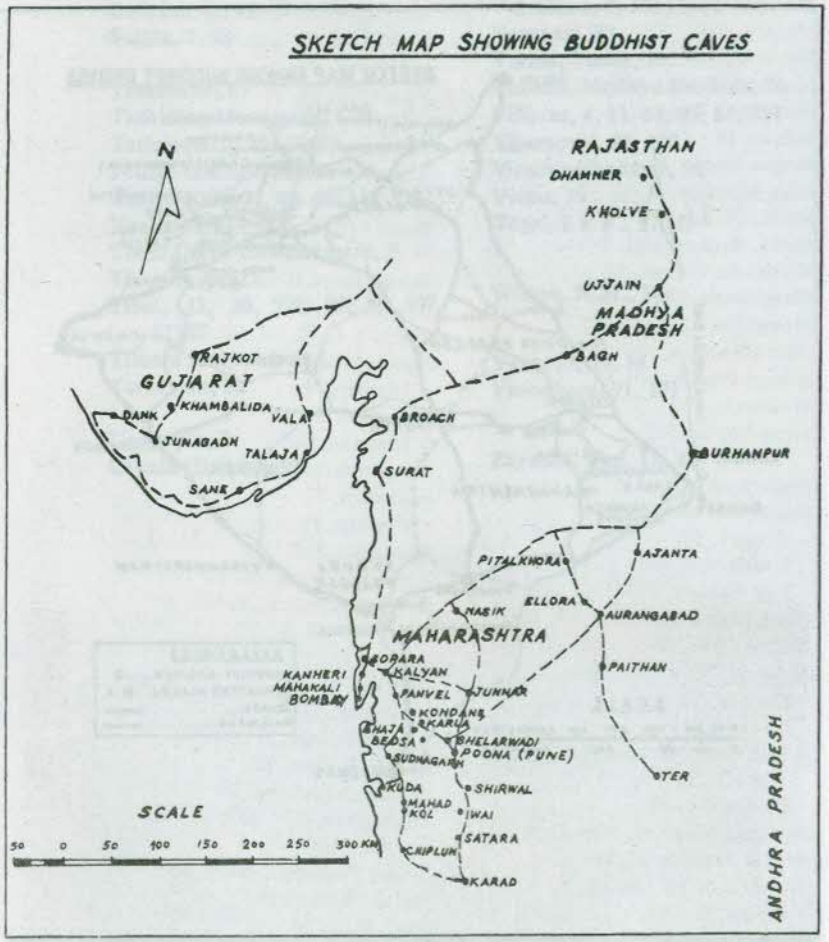
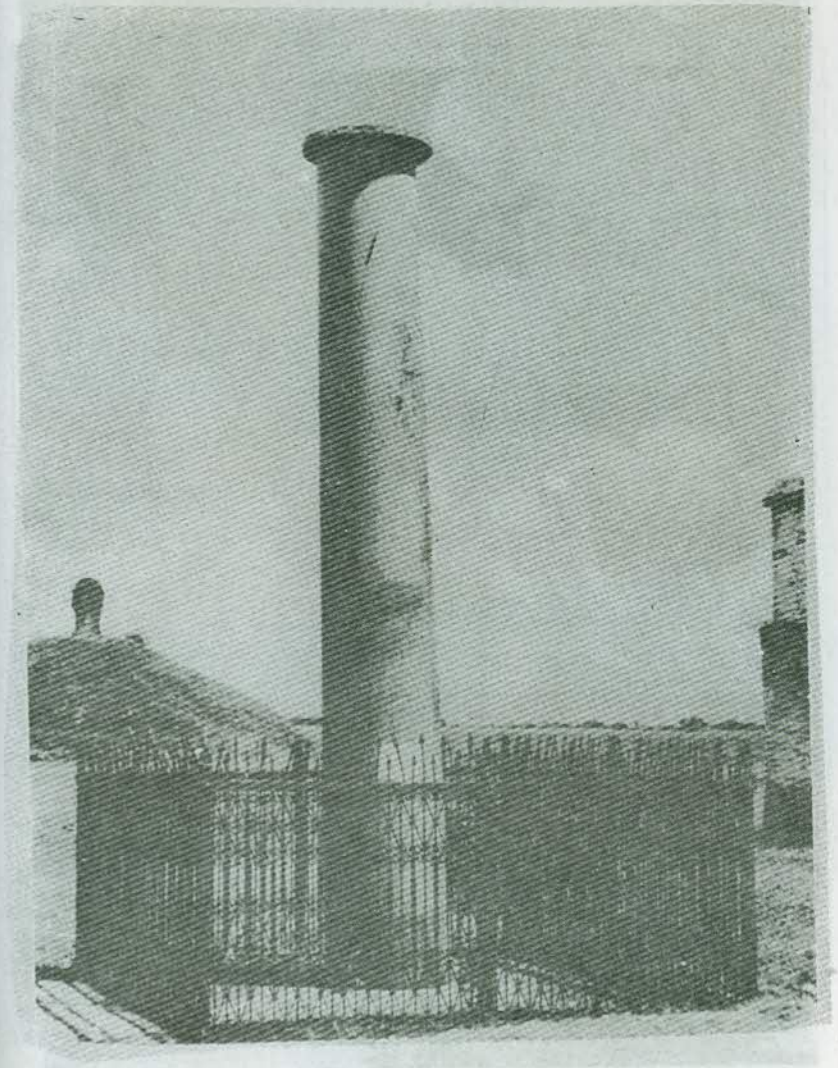
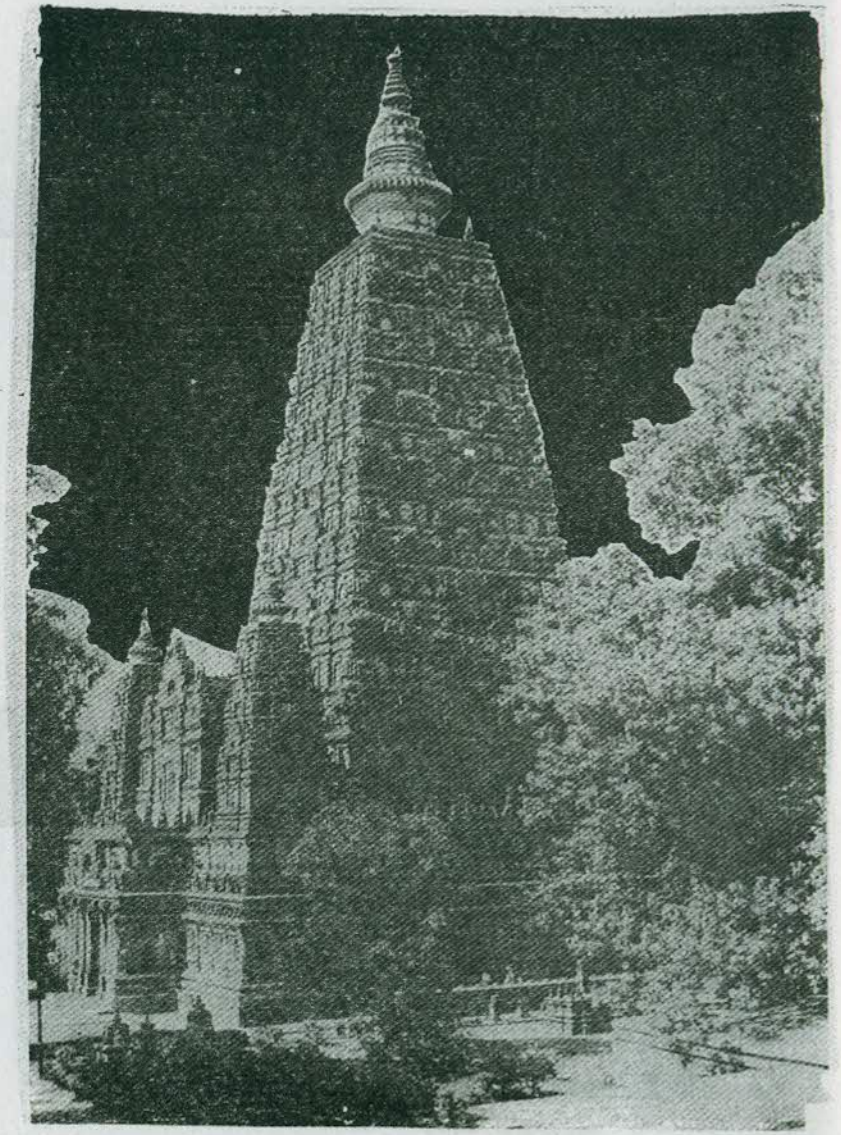
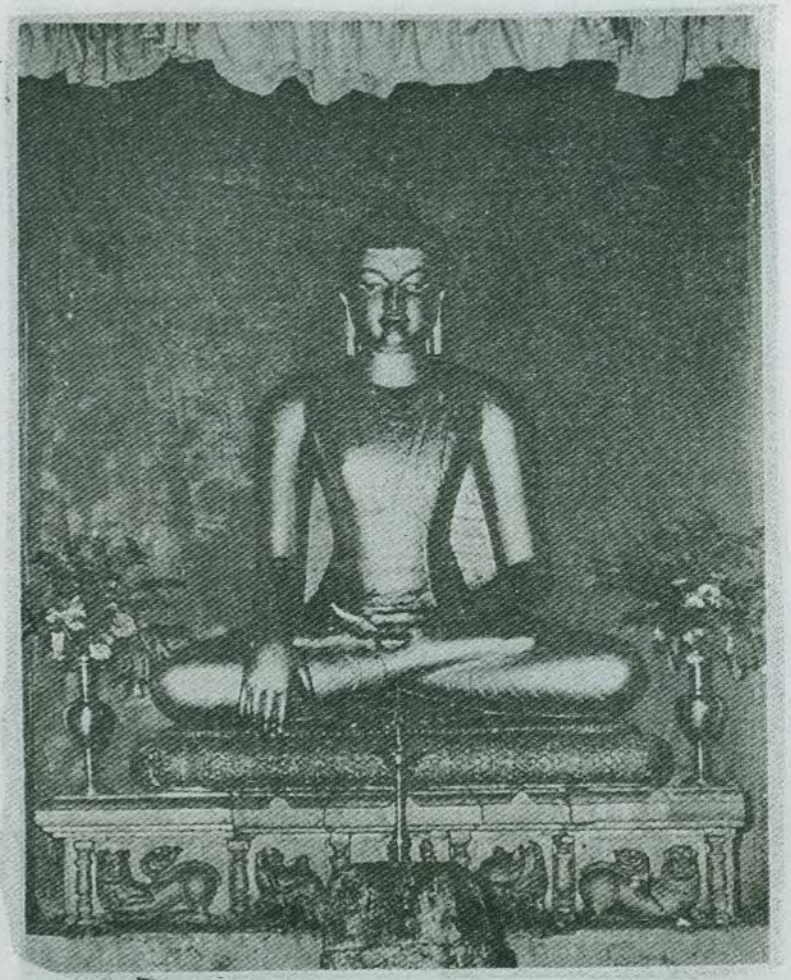



SKETCH MAP SHOWING BUDDHIST CAVES
N
RAJASTHAN
DHAMNER
KHOLVE
UJJAIN
MADHYA PRADESH
BAGH
RAJKOT
GUJIARAT
KHAMBALIDA
DANK
VALA
BROACH
JUNAGADH
TALAJA
BURHANPUR
SURAT
SANE
AJANTA
PITALKHORA
ELLORA
AURANGABAD
NASIK
MAHARASHTRA
SOPARA
KALYAN
PAITHAN
KANHERI
MAHAKALI
BOMBAY
PANVEL
JUNNAR
KONDANE
KARLA
BHAJA
BEDSA
BHELARWADI
POONA (PUNE)
SUDHAGARH
TER
KUDA
SHIRWAL
MAHAD
KOL
WAI
SATARA
CHIPLUN
KARAD
SCALE
50 0 50 100 150 200 250 300 KM
ANDHRA PRADESH

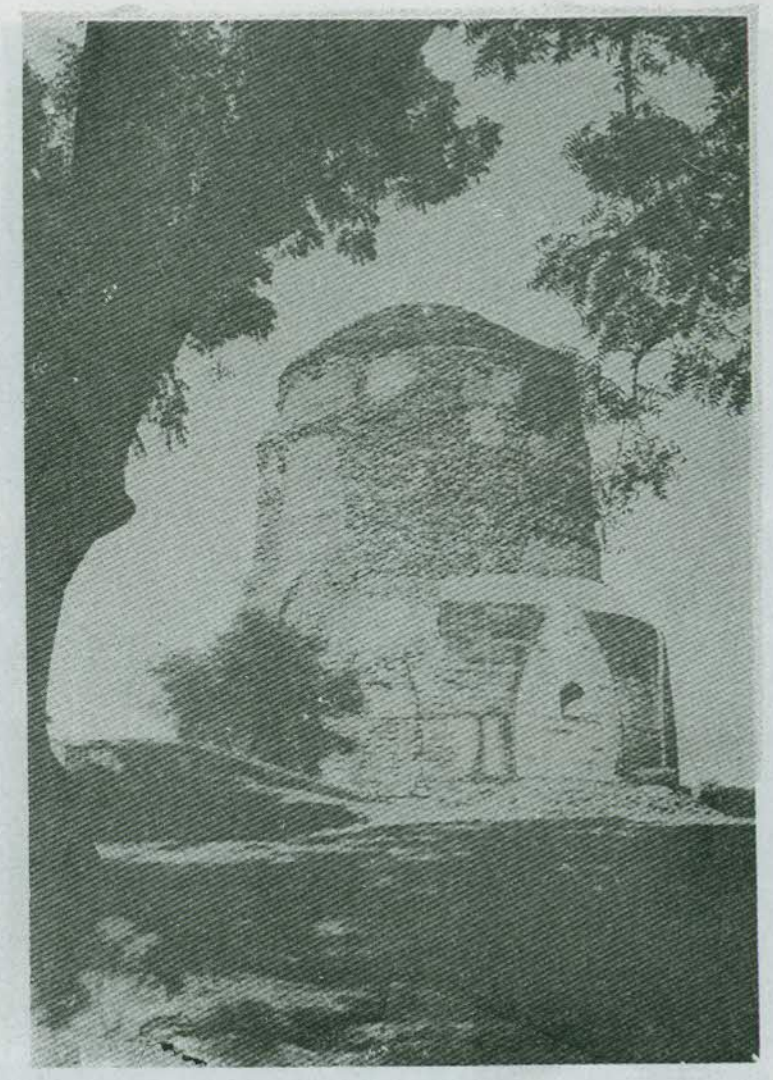




2. Maha Bodhi Temple, Bodh Gaya

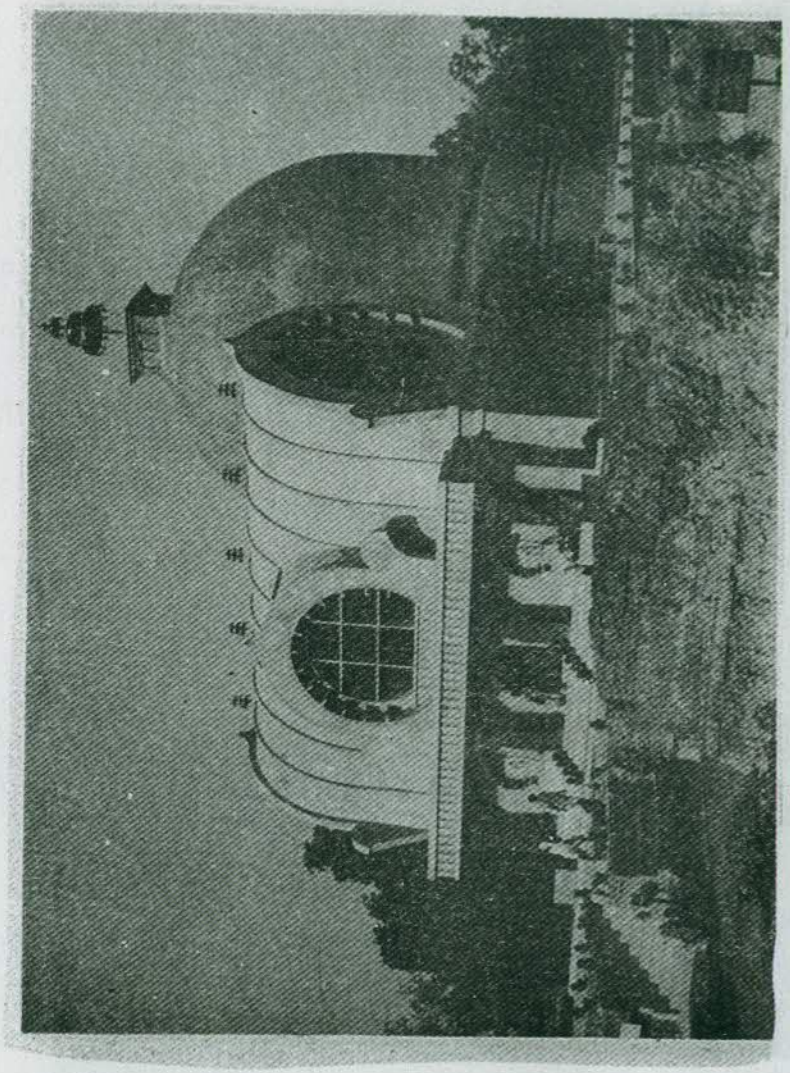


3. Image of Lord Buddha, Bodh Gaya

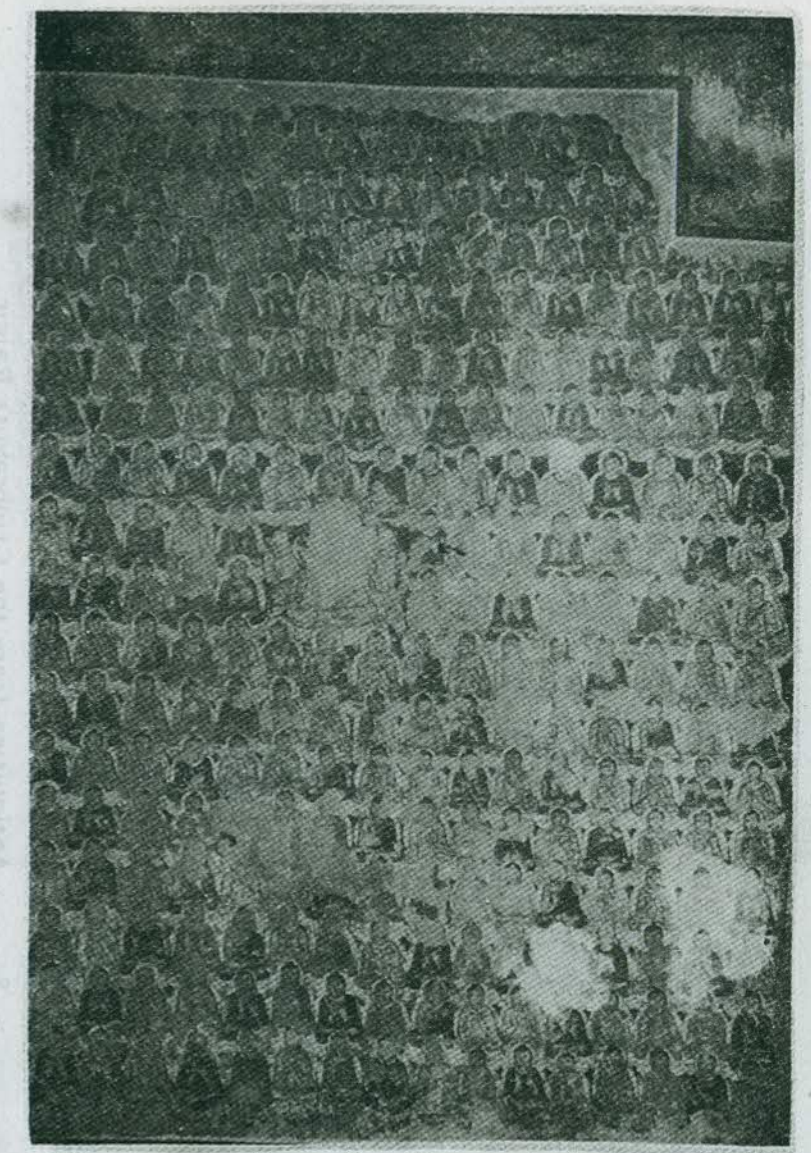


4. Dhamek Stupa, Sarnath

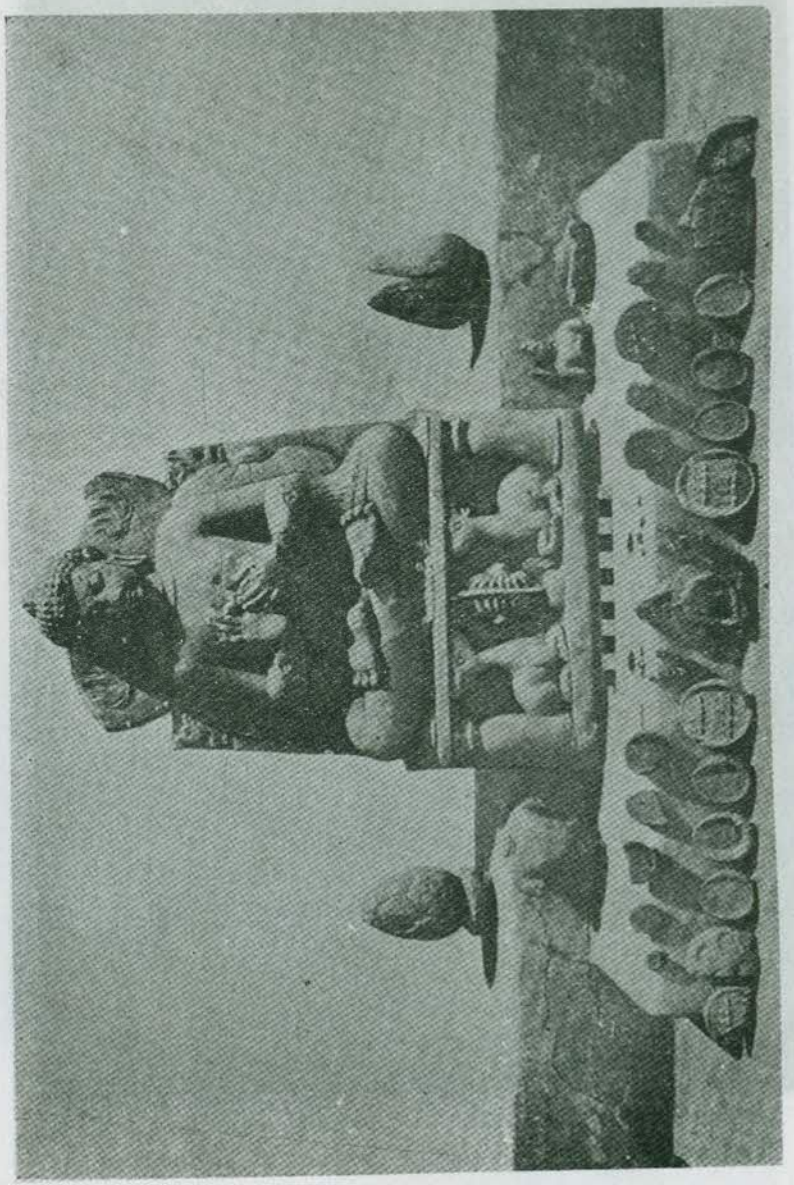
5. Preaching Buddha in Sarnath Museum



6. The Stupa and the Nirvana Temple, Kushinagar



Miracle of Sravasti, Thousand Buddhas, Cave 2 Ajanta

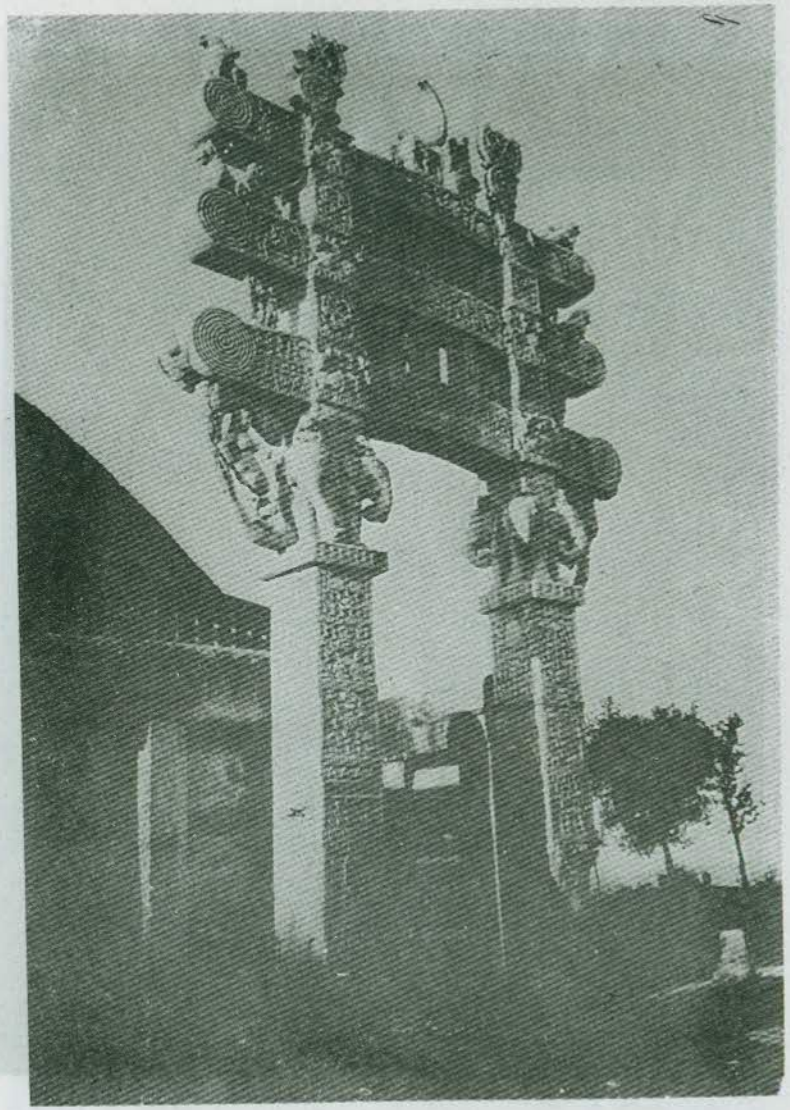


8. Antiquities from the Gridhrakuta Rajgir

9. Miracle of Sankasya, Descent of Buddha from heaven, North Gateway, Stupa1, Sanchi

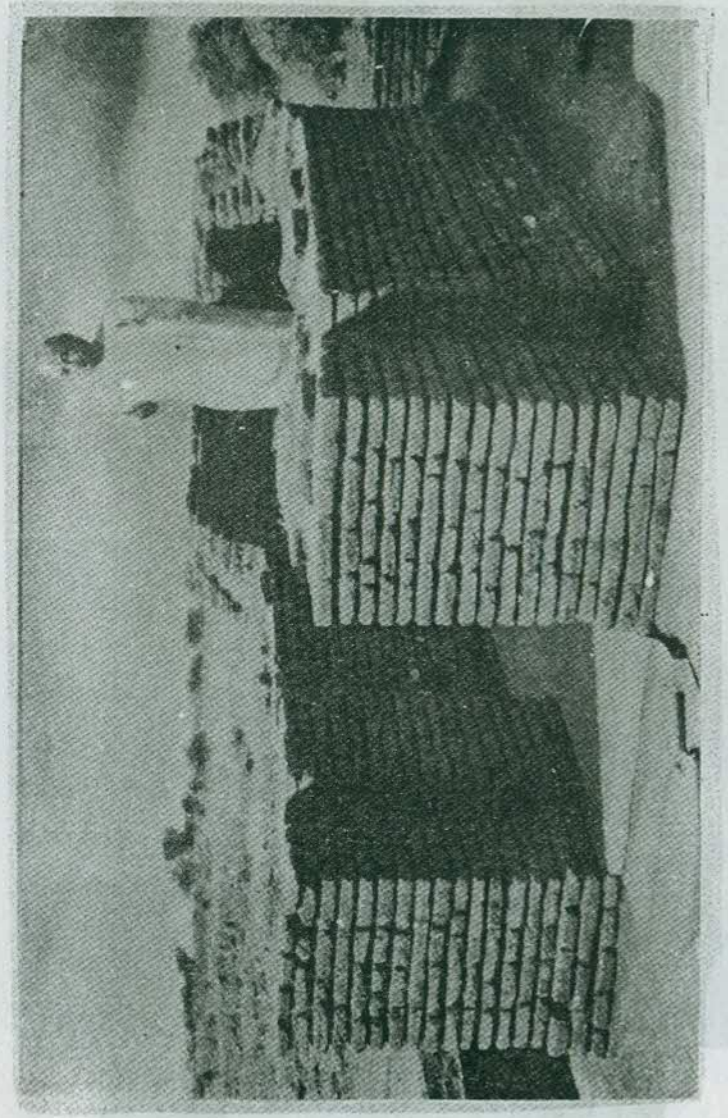
10. Miracle of Vaisali, North Gateway, Stupa 1, Sanchi

11. Standing Buddha (Bronze) in Nalanda Museum



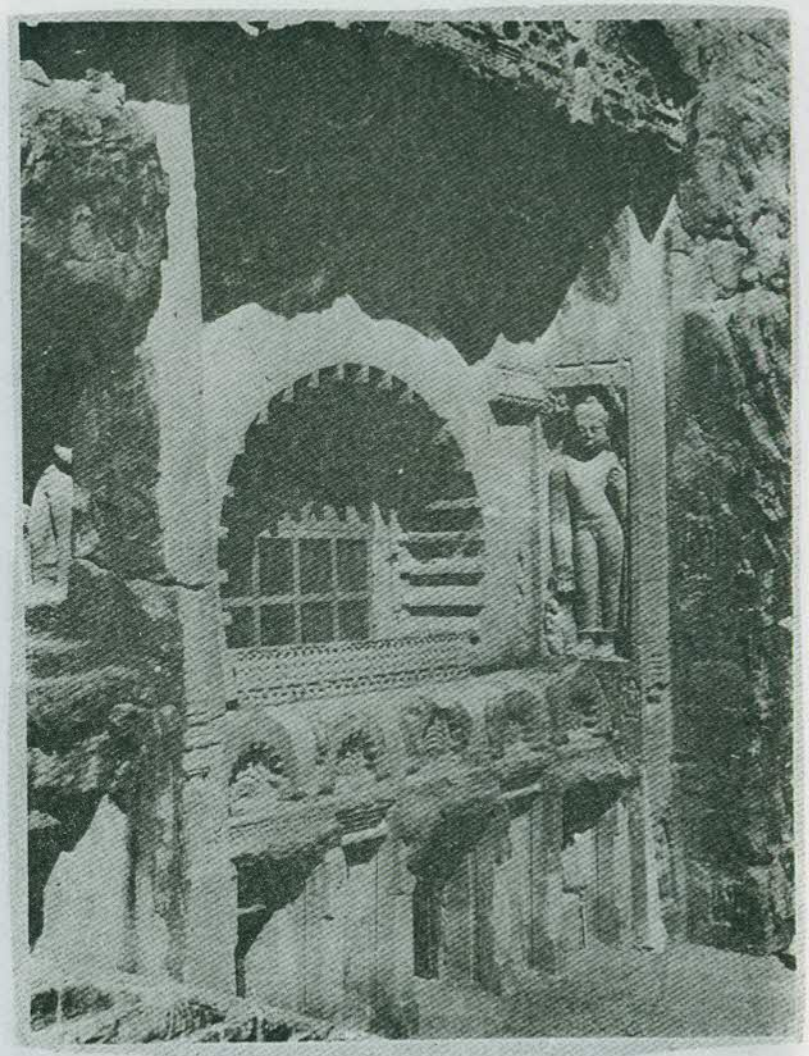
12. North Gateway, Stupa 1, Sanchi

13. Image of Buddha, Amaravati

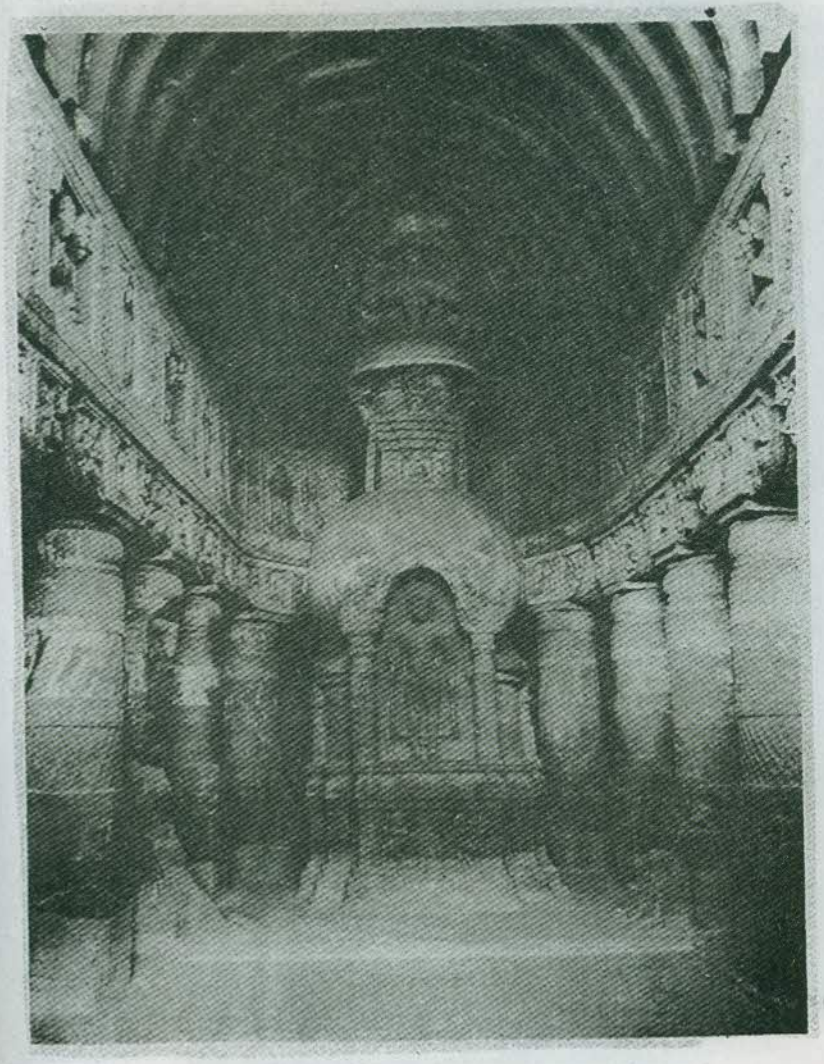


14. Reconstructed Chaitna-griha Nagarjunakonda

15. Bodhisattva Padmapani, Cave 1, Ajanta

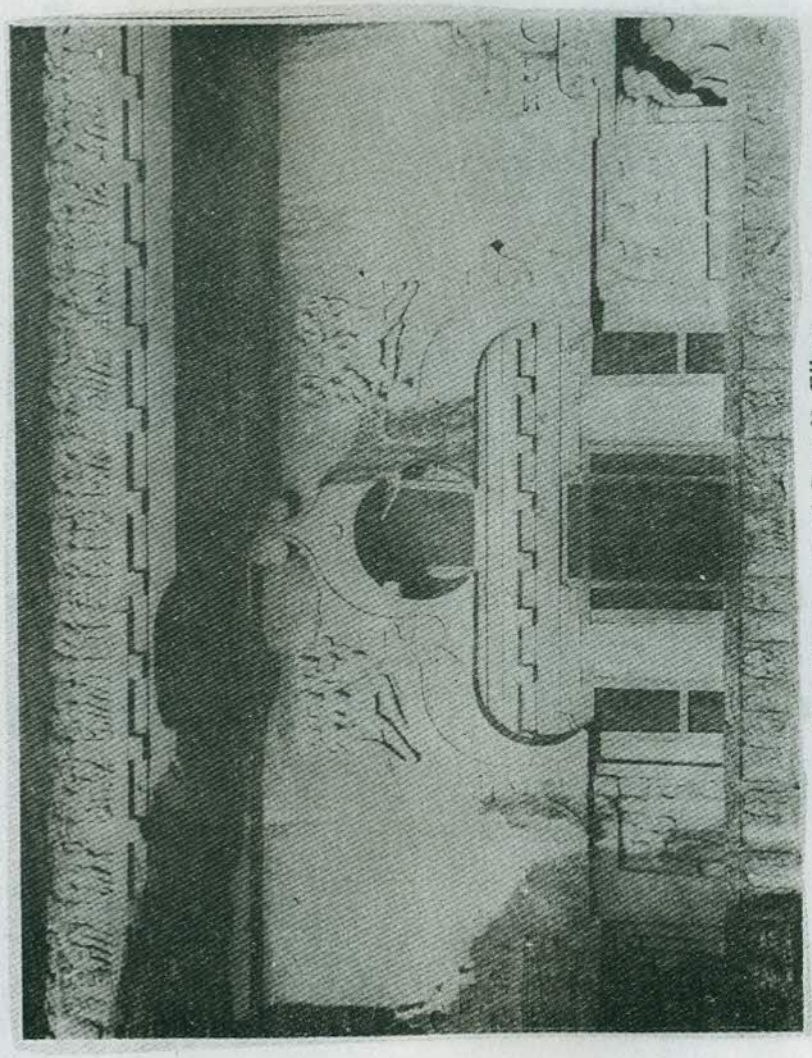


16. The Facade of Cave XIX, Ajanta

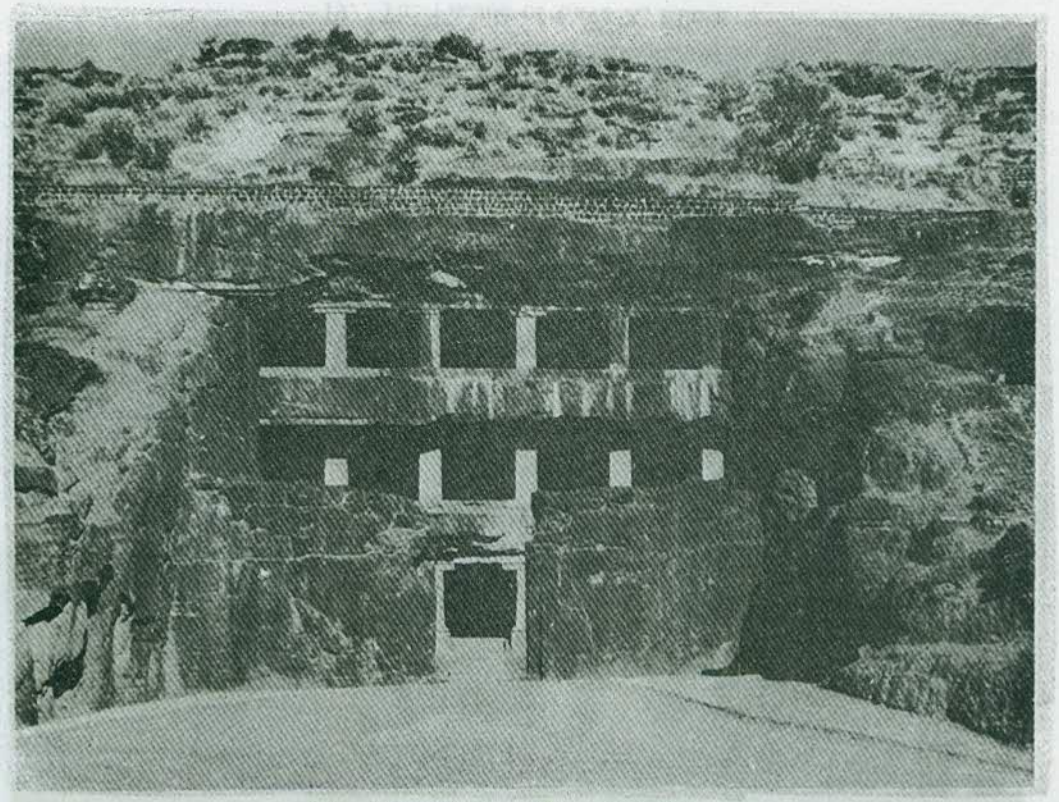


17. The Chaitya-hall Cave XIX, Ajanta

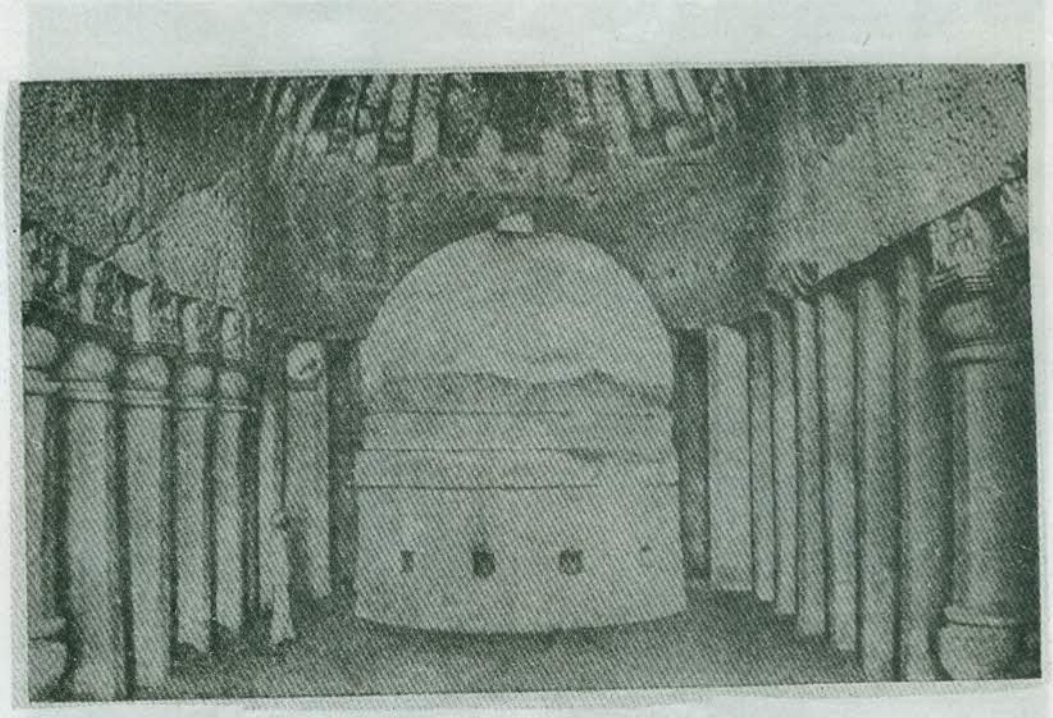
18. The Facade of Cave XXVI, Ajanta



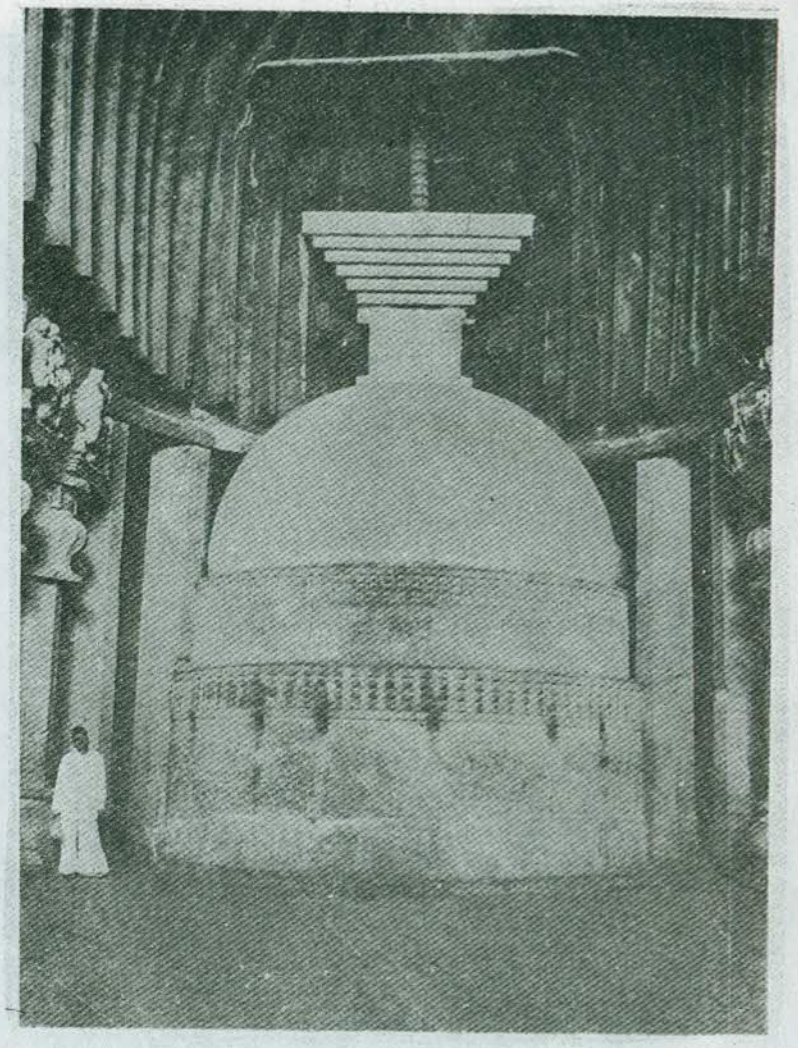
19. The Facade of Cave X, Ellora



20. General View Cave XII, Ellora



21. The Chaitya-hall, Cave 3, Kanheri



22 The Chaitya-hall, Karla.